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# *The Musical Quarterly*

O. G. SONNECK, *Editor*

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# **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY**



# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

O. G. SONNECK, *Editor*

VOL. 7, No. 1

JANUARY, 1921

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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. VII

JANUARY, 1921

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## AGAINST MODERN "ISM"

By CONSTANTIN VON STERNBERG

**M**USICAL criticism in recent years has taken the hyper-modern or modernistic composers more and more seriously. Confining itself no longer to an acknowledgement of their unquestionable ingenuity and their novel contributions to the technic of composition, it seems to have allowed these technical matters to mislead its judgment so far as to differentiate no longer between legitimate modernity and its frenzied caricature—*modernism*. Some of the usually serious critics of America and England—not to mention the French and German who speak, of course, *pro domo*—when judging some out-and-out modernistic work, impress one of late very much like the man who, upon being told that a live fish was walking in a certain street, laughed very heartily—at first; but as more and more people rushed by his window in the direction of that street to see the wonder and some of them urged him to come along, his laugh gradually abated; he began to feel uncertain, then shrugged his shoulders, finally put on his hat and followed the hoaxed throng, saying: "Well—maybe—who knows?"

This attitude of earnest critics must cause great alarm among such musicians and music-lovers as demand from the divine art more than mere "cleverness." They must needs feel dismayed by seeing high praise bestowed upon compositions which, technically clever though they are, lack the very fundamentals of art, Ethos and Sincerity. In the presence or, as it may be, the absence of these two elements lies the chiefest difference between art and artifice—in other words, between modernity and modernism. A perfect analogy to this distinction can be found by comparing commerce with commercialism where, as with modernism, it is the "ism" that changes the good into the bad.



Commerce enriches a nation, and not only materially, for it also brings people and knowledge from other lands; it causes travel, exploration; it broadens a nation's outlook upon the world; it was traceably, though innocently, the cause of the Renaissance; and it is—or is supposed to be—based upon the principle of "fair exchange." In one word, commerce is an excellent human *institution*, while commercialism is a reprehensible, greed-begotten *tendency*. Too rapacious to be content with the proper returns of legitimate commerce, commercialism tends to sacrifice the principle of fair exchange on the altar of money-getting; it tends to turn every human endeavor into inordinate monetary gain and to sneer at any effort that is prompted by higher, nobler impulses. It readily takes advantage of the unfortunate with a view to enslave him; and, if he be of the type that regards proper monetary returns as a necessary but natural incidental, Heaven help him! The "ism" implies the abuse of the legitimate for monetary gain *beyond* proper returns; and it is precisely the same with musical modernism, as will presently be seen.

Like the promoters of "get-rich-quick" schemes, the modernists have armed themselves with many arguments which, however, reveal their speciousness upon the slightest scrutiny. Whenever the merit of their work is doubted or denied they say at once that "all innovators were at first antagonized," and then attempt to support their argument by quoting Palestrina, Monteverdi, Beethoven, Wagner, Liszt and others. They carefully suppress the facts in those cases. They never mention the sober reality—that Palestrina was not a modernist in any sense; he was a *purifier* of church music, rather the opposite of a modernist. Monteverdi was a contemporary of just such a type of dilettantic modernists as infest our time; he did use some of their "stunts," but only for artistic purposes, not—as they did—for their own sake. He and Palestrina were men of that soul caliber for which the present musical world waits with fervent hope. The name of Monteverdi's modernists may be found in books on the history of music; their works, however, are dead, dead forever, while his own Madrigals are, when properly performed, still full of life and show that he was—for his time—very modern, indeed, but not modernistic by any means. True, he used the unprepared dissonances, suspensions and other harmonic innovations of his contemporaries, where they were applicable with good taste; here and there; as spices; but he supplied, first of all, the substantial musical meat to which to apply them. He did not make a meal of the spices. And he was *not* antagonized by his public. Neither was

Beethoven until he reached—in his latest works—what might be designated as the "period of prophesy." From the works of this period the public—far from antagonizing him—kept only aloof for a while; which was natural, since prophecies need time for their fulfillment, though the time in his case was not very long. Those "prophetic" works, however, appeared in the last quarter of his life; they were, after all, legitimate extensions of principles under which he had grown up. They were in no sense "departures" from them, while our modernists *begin* their musical life with departures. Monteverdi, too, did not adopt the modern style until late in life. He wrote his first opera "Ariane" at forty. Verdi changed his style with "Aida" at the age of fifty-seven. That Wagner was antagonized is true, but it was a purely personal antagonism partly called forth by his pugnacious personality and partly by the—more or less secret—orders from the reigning German courts because of his—only too active—participation in the revolution of 1848. The public at large, however, took him to its heart at once, and such musicians as were not directly or indirectly dependent upon the Courts (e.g., Court-conductors) combatted the Court intrigue vigorously, often imperiling their livelihood thereby (the present writer among them). As for Liszt, the most modest and self-effacing of all composers, he was never antagonized by the public; his wider popularity as a symphonist had to wait but a short time until orchestral technic had developed sufficiently to cope with his works.

The argument of antagonism against innovators is cleverly selected to shield any new musical monstrosity and to repel any attack upon it; it might have served this purpose if it did not happen to be the very argument which whilom "Brother Jasper" resorted to. This negro parson preached that "the earth am stand-in' still, yeth, stockstill and the sun is movin' roun' an' roun' it." When he was told that he was being laughed at he consoled his flock and himself by saying: "Tha's all right! Galileo was laughed at, too, an' he was to'tured to boot; yeth, my brethren, to'tured!" Galileo and—Brother Jasper! Monteverdi, Beethoven, Wagner and—the little modernists! What a parallel! Would any sincere man take refuge behind such an argument as that of antagonism?

Our modernists claim that every composer has a right to have his own style, and the claim is quite just; but there is a world of difference between style and mannerism and of this difference they seem to be quite unaware. "Style" is a personal, characteristic way of expressing a thought, and it demands dignity and

distinction. It applies, not to the thought, but to its expression. It is one feature in the physiognomy of a work, not the work itself. It is a trait which adapts itself to any thought. Beethoven's E flat Concerto differs so entirely from the Chopinesque one in G major that, were it not for the style, one could scarcely believe them to have come from the same mind. The same diversity of thought, unharmed by the sameness of style, prevails in his Symphonies, Quartets, Sonatas, etc. With our modernists matters are reversed: instead of dressing their thoughtlets in their favorite manner, they handle only such little ideas as will fit their stereotype manner of dressing.

"Eulenspiegel, Don Quixote, Salome, Electra"—are they images of normal humans swayed by some great passion? Are they not, musically, grotesque caricatures, and have their literary originators not intended some of them to be caricatures? There is, of course, no reason why a musician should not occasionally indulge in caricature; Wagner did it in the "Meistersinger"; but—is caricature a musical life-pursuit? The mannerism of Richard Strauss makes one suspect that he aims at the questionable honor of being called a "musical Hogarth."

Another one of our modernists pussyfoots, like a cat in a china closet, over all sorts of possible and impossible discords; of course, *pianissimo*, feeling quite rightly that, after all, there are *some* things which should not be said "right out loud." He has discovered the venerable hexatonic scale—(*pereant quæ ante nos*)—and with it and the everlasting chords of the ninth and eleventh he succeeded in producing what may cheerfully be granted to be a new "color"; but since it blinded him to all other colors his compositions sound all alike. This is sheer, unmitigated *mannerism*, not style. He, like all the modernists, does not fit the clothes to the children of his brain; he selects the children to fit the clothes.

It might be said that without intrinsic merit the works of the modernists could not have acquired the vogue which the public accords to them. Vogue? Indeed? Vogue, that French euphemism for "Fad!" Whatever the cause or causes may be, one cannot help noticing that the restlessness and superficiality of modern life has grown to a degree so alarming as to make "vogue" a totally untrustworthy criterion. What dominates our musical time is, unfortunately, no longer artistic merit; it still finds its appreciators, no doubt, in the executive field of music, but in the creative field it is mere sensational novelty that attracts the public. And as sensationalism (another "ism") is by

its very nature of but short-lived attractiveness, the public change their fads almost as often as they do their garments. They are either mentally unequipped or too frivolous to take the time and interest to satisfy themselves as to the depth or shallowness of a composition. And, really, why should they? A kind, fatherly government tells them what to eat and, especially, what to drink; the papers tell them what to wear, what to think, what to hate, what to like; and the public's unwavering obedience to these dictates has almost the dignity of military discipline. Hence, as long as a composition is new—*new*, above all, pleasantly or painfully new—makes enough unnecessary noise (we love noise, don't we?), employs a needlessly huge apparatus, *and* is much spoken of in the papers, the public will toy with it for a while, in utter disregard of the fact that the things in art which were only new never lived long enough to grow old. Thus to the public—taking them by and large—all music is but a *moment musical*, a trifle, soon to be forgotten for the next one.

To prevent this forgetting as long as possible the modernistic sensation manufacturers employ, beside their specious arguments, all the brazen methods of commercialism. Not only do they engage propagandists (some of whom are holding rather high artistic positions), but they also have their press agents. Many papers, daily and weekly, keep public attention alive by the sort of personal gossip which has nothing whatever to do with art; they tell the public "what the great A is *going* to write, when";—"what the equally great B thinks of writing, some day, possibly, perhaps";—"what prices they get for their manuscripts; what private quarrels they have with one another." The pictures of these musical *chevaliers d'industrie* are shown in the papers as they look on board ship, in a canoe, at the tennis court, at breakfast, playing with children, sitting in their library with scholarly pose, in their studio where a photographer caught them—purely by chance, of course—brooding over some deeply problematic piece of music; on horseback, swimming in the sea or, in fact, in any attitude which the late Anthony Comstock or the police would not have objected to.

Our modernists do not stand aside of the whirl and turmoil of the frivolous world, devoting themselves to their ideals and letting the passing show wend its silly way—(shade of Brahms!)—oh, no! They go right into the very thickest of it, straining every nerve to catch the slangy, "jazzy" slogan of the day and, having caught it, they turn not away from it with a pitiful smile, but they chime lustily in.

good

"Sensations, is it?" they say, "why, you shall have them! Just listen, friends, brothers, fellow citizens! Here are sensations for you that will make your blood curdle and give you the creeps! Here's an Opera, a drama without action; 'Mealy-Ass and Pale-and-Sandy,' seen through a gauze curtain as in a haze. Everything in it is nebulous: scenery, costumes, characters, music—everything! The whole thing as morbid as a morphine dream, as nerveless as a cocaine victim. You need not understand it—it must be 'sensed!' And the music: every harmony an unprepared ninth-chord, every change a jolt to decent ears. Methodically mad. Come one, come all! It's the 'thing!' All the ladies that go to Paris for their gowns say so. They ought to know!"

Here's another sensation: "The Bible dramatized! Ruth? Magdalene? Deborah? Not much!—*Salome!* Perverseness glorified! You'll shudder physically and morally—but morals be hanged, we give you sensations! Isn't that what you want? The old masters gave you what you *needed*; they lifted you to their height, but *nous avons changé tout cela*. We come nicely down to you and give you, not what you need, but what your esthetic demoralization and morbidity craves!"

Nice ethics, that! And why all this to-do? What for? Only and exclusively for the *laus dives plebei* in terms of coin which the late Vespasian regarded as "odorless." Modernism—commercialism!

In the opening paragraph of this discussion will be found an unstinted acknowledgement of the modernists' ingenuity. Their orchestral "effects," though mostly without "cause"; their harmonic twists and kindred hocus pocus tricks, are certainly ingenious; but the first syllable of "ingenius" declares the absence of genius. Ingenuity provides new means—genius has new purposes. Ingenuity does clever things—genius does great things. Ingenuity contrives—genius creates. Ingenuity—and this is an essential point—acts *consciously*, genius acts *unconsciously*. No fair-minded critic can dispute the modernists' ingenuity, for they do some remarkably crafty things. They must have brooded over them like Mime over the broken sword, and over their—often cacaphonic—harmonies they must have worked very hard; so hard, indeed, that—from too much sedentary work—they all contracted the musical asthma. They seem to be no longer able to think a melodic thought out to its natural, logical ending; they start it, one measure or two, maybe three, and then—phft—the breath gives out; they have to take a fresh breath and—start something else. Their works—like Kipling's "Bandarlog"—seem

all the time on the verge of achieving something, but—again like the Bandarlog—they never come to anything more substantial than noise. There is never any real development, no real flow—only broken scraps of sentences, a starveling dribble of ideas.

Nevertheless it may be cheerfully granted that some—or even many—of their innovations are well worth preserving until—well—until some real master, some *genius* appears who will—to speak with Handel—"know vat to do mit 'em;" who will use them *à la* Monteverdi, for purposes *beyond* themselves; who will handle them with sovereign mastery, as an architect may employ some new building material. Until this master appears, the modernists can be regarded only as purveyors or furnishers of just such material; *technical* material of which the ethical value in the field of composition is not much higher than—*mutatis mutandum*—that of Czerny's studies in the field of piano playing. The industriousness of the modernists deserves credit, no doubt (so did Czerny's and Clementi's); but when their doings begin to affect young students, causing them to neglect the great masters, as so many of them do; when these students go into raptures over a little detail like a new chord-succession and lose the solid ground on which the marvelous edifice of music is built, until they get lost in a mire of cacophony—the time has come for a word of serious warning.

Our ear is a defenseless and, therefore, a very complaisant organ. It is in one respect like the stomach. As the latter can become accustomed to poisons like arsenic or cocaine, so can the ear (only too easily) become accustomed to any sound, from an alarm clock to a distonating vocalist. This complaisance of the ear, due principally to its defenselessness, should neither be abused nor speculated upon; on the contrary, the ear should be kept so keenly sensitive as to reject any cacophony that is not justified by musico-dramatic necessity and sparingly, judiciously used. As the medical effect of poisonous drugs depends entirely upon the dosage and becomes injurious by over-prolonged use, so do musical discords lose their dramatic effects altogether when through their over-frequency our ear becomes accustomed to them.

As for the plea that our modernists have a new "message to the world," the reply to it was furnished long ago by a very wise man who said:

*I hear the message well enough—  
—alas, I don't believe it.*

# CHAMBER-MUSIC : ITS PAST AND FUTURE

By CYRIL I. SCOTT

## I

**I**N the days of "good old father Haydn" as he is often sentimentally called—though why not equally "good old father Handel or Bach"; for, if anybody is entitled to the name of father, certainly the latter is, considering he had twenty-three children—in the days of "good old father Haydn," I repeat, the writing of chamber-music was not the brain-taxing affair it at present is. If we judge from this old master's idea of writing a trio, which was only trio-esque in the sense of having three instruments, but resembled more a duet as far as part-writing was concerned, and if we then compare it to the Trio of Ravel, we shall see what tremendous possibilities were latent in that simple form, and what great strides music has made within the last hundred years or so. Indeed, it seems that in those days Haydn considered he had adequately done his duty by that particular form when he contrived that his 'cello should proceed in unison with, and so reinforce, his pianoforte bass, whereas nowadays this very indolent simplicity certainly does not satisfy our moderns, who are not content to write a trio by name but must needs also write a trio by nature.

But to the subject of trios we shall return anon, for we shall be landed in difficulties if we do not, at the outset of our enterprise, make some clear definition as to what *has* been meant, *is* meant and *may* be meant in the future by the term chamber-music. It is in fact evident that the designation is not a very happy one, being used far too loosely and in a most arbitrary manner. Nor can we fail to see that much which really is chamber-music is not so termed: for what could be more suited to a room and less suited to a hall than a violin solo, yet how often do we hear, for instance, the Chaconne of Bach, or some unaccompanied piece for 'cello, in a big hall instead of in its proper place? Thus one would almost like to raise a plea for keeping types of music (like children) in their proper places—and demand that what really is chamber-music be termed and treated as such without any attempt to stretch it beyond its inherent capacities. In my country (England), for instance, a singer will

appear in the middle of an orchestral concert and sing several songs with pianoforte accompaniment, the anti-climax—after the performance of large orchestral works—being deplorable. But the fact is that for some perverse and unaccountable reason, voice and pianoforte in conjunction do not fall into the category of chamber-music; the result being that such a conjunction finds performance anywhere from the small dimensions of a duchess' boudoir to the colossal and ill-sounding dimensions of the Albert Hall. And yet if this inartistic procedure obtains in connection with singers, it also obtains with a violinist or 'cellist—who likewise in the middle of a large orchestral concert (where usually he has played a concerto) comes forward with an accompanist and unblushingly plays a *morceau de salon* to the tinkling of a pianoforte. This is in fact a convention, and one which has developed largely from mercenary reasons—i.e., the soloist has been engaged, and therefore the audience must have its money's worth, however inartistic and unesthetic that money's worth may be.

Now there is no gainsaying that a solo-violin or solo-'cello sounds in itself very thin in a large hall, but when it immediately follows upon the enormous volume of sound produced by a large orchestra, the effect is highly detrimental to the very greatest and most accomplished artists. 'Cello-solos and violin-solos—in fact all solos excepting those which never take place in serious concerts (I allude to trombone, cornet or bass-tuba solos)—belong to the domain of chamber-music and only to that, and the sooner this is realized the more artistic and esthetic will our concerts become. I grant that, as regards the voice, there does exist a certain difference, in that the vocal cords of a singer like Madame Clara Butt (who possesses what is termed “a magnificent organ”) are capable of producing more actual noise, or I ought more politely to say, a greater volume of sound, than the catgut cords of a violin or 'cello. But strictly speaking (for Madame Butt is an exception), all songs *without orchestral accompaniment* are exclusively chamber-music, and even more so than compositions which demand a greater number of instruments, and which being termed such, are never introduced into orchestral concerts. Nay, who has heard of, let us say, a pianoforte-quintet or a string-sextet being introduced between two choral works or two symphonies by way of an interlude?

I shall, of course, be saying the obvious when I remark that six instruments produce more sound than one, just as two pigs under a gate (to quote the old riddle) produce more squeals than one; yet why, as already inferred, music which is more of the chamber order is not regarded as such, while music which is less so is hardly termed chamber-music at all, is a question I leave open for those “learned



idlers" who are fond of engaging in controversy. However, if this article succeeds in calling attention to the necessity and esthetic value of proper categorization, it will not have been written altogether in vain.

## II

I was about to state that at one time nearly all music was chamber-music, but on prompt reflection—for certainly the music which brought down the Walls of Jericho was not chamber-music—I must amend the statement and be content to point out that a large percentage of what we now have as symphonic music was performed in *rooms* of varying sizes, and seldom in a hall bigger than one we should regard as suitable for our present-day chamber concerts. I am reminded of this, in fact, by certain pictures portraying a musical evening in the time of Frederick the Great, in which half of the room is taken up by the musicians (and the chandeliers) and less than half by the courtiers. As to the instruments, I see a certain number of strings, wood-wind and a harpsichord, and perhaps a harp—which after all, is a very tidy little orchestra. But even this melodious picture portrays comparatively modern times, and if we go back further to the days of Shakespeare, it becomes almost as strangely out of place to imagine people attending a set concert as to imagine them attending a motor race. Indeed, leaving purely instrumental music aside, we can only consider *madrigals*, *rounds* and glee-singing as chamber-music in one sense, even though these did often take place in the more poetical atmosphere of a garden, or perhaps a village green, or in the snow-clad street outside "my lady's window." Yes, well might we say, in those days music was small and choice, whereas nowadays, music is largely the opposite; we have gone to the other extreme, and but a few years ago the acme of a musical treat (to some people which I personally should be impolite enough to consider *unmusical*) was to hear Handel's "Messiah" with a chorus of three thousand, if not more, and an orchestra, or let us rather say a *band*, of two hundred and fifty performers. Really it almost suggests Rabelais in its enormity—or was it a forerunner of "Big Bertha," the gun that shot seventy-two (or was it one hundred and twenty?) miles?

All the same, in considering the probabilities and possibilities of our subject, it is fairly obvious that in this connection, at any rate, the reaction has already set in, and one thing strikes us very forcibly: in chamber-music we are not increasing our number of instruments, but rather *utilizing their fullest capacities instead*. Indeed, if you will have it phrased in a homely way, we are economizing in players

but making them work the harder. . . . And yet, let it not be thought we moderns are the first to have done this; for I remember hearing an anecdote about Beethoven, who, after writing a certain passage and confronting the players with it, discovered they rebelled and declared the passage impossible of execution:—whereupon they were simply told to go home and practise it, which they *did*, with the desired result.

At this juncture we may review the past and certain of its forms—those forms of chamber-music which, although penned by great masters, have, for reasons which this article may attempt to explain, not stood the so-called test of time, but have been banished to that semi-oblivion which constitutes them as of mere historical interest and nothing more. And I allude to such forms as trios for strings only; that simplest of all forms which come under the arbitrary heading of chamber-music. Now, I am inclined to think there are two reasons why certain types of music become so soon antiquated, the first and obvious that in our modern days of polyphony, they sound too thin and are too easily understandable, like a Wordsworth poem about a toy boat and a beggar boy. But if that is the first reason, there is yet a subtler and more psychological one which has every bit as much, if not more, to do with the matter. I allude to the fact of the novelty having worn off—novelty being a far more important sustainer of interest than people are apt to suppose. As I have pointed out in my book called the *Philosophy of Modernism*<sup>1</sup>, however much we may revere John Keats, and however often the first line of *Endymion* may have been on our grandfather's lips, the fact remains that "a thing of beauty is" not always "a joy forever." To apply the adjusted adage to the case in point, the beauty of thin music may fade as a once beautiful photograph may fade, and for that matter become thinner and more bilious-looking until there is nothing left. But the question arises, is *all* "thin" music doomed to oblivion, both of the past and the present? The answer leads one to reflect, and is instructive. It brings, in fact, to our notice that if the "thin" music is sufficiently ancient, it pleases us exceedingly. And why? Because the very quaintness of its harmonies and other devices falls upon our ears as *novel* once again. How delightful are some very old madrigals, and how delightful again some old folk-songs with their original accompaniments—and not the ones superadded by a later composer (Beethoven, for instance, who set accompaniments suited to his own day

<sup>1</sup>Kegan Paul.

to many of these old airs). And yet, was not Beethoven a greater master of music than these old madrigal composers? This admitted, why have his particular accompaniments failed to reach a satisfying immortality, and still more, why have his *string-trios* failed to do so? Because, as we pointed out, some things of beauty are not always joys forever.

There enters into this whole question what we may term the element of *musical suitability*, or, perhaps better said, *poetical suitability*. To illustrate my point, I may mention, that one day long ago when I attended a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays in the theatre at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at a certain juncture of the play, there struck up the strains of a few mandolins and violas, a piece of incidental music so poetically *suitable* and so novel in sound, that both the composer with whom I was at the time and I were fascinated and charmed. Here was a little "fantasia" of "chamber-music" or garden music (yes, why not garden music?) which appealed to us as the very essence of appropriateness, not only in connection with the play we were witnessing, but in connection with the actual musical content to which those few violas and mandolins gave expression. And yet, charming though this was, who could conceive of a lengthy and pretentious chamber work composed in sonata form, and containing four movements, and lasting half an hour, written if you please, for three mandolins and two violas? (I hear a voice within me saying, Beware! one of your best friends may be doing this very thing ere long—you never can tell. True, but nevertheless I will not retract my question.)

It is just this lack of poetical appropriateness which I feel to be responsible for the bad wearing qualities of the string-trio of the Beethovenian and pre-Beethovenian epoch. To be appealing nowadays, it is not harmonically subtle enough, not poetically picturesque enough, not melodically quaint enough. I am, of course, aware that this statement may shock certain chamber-music enthusiasts. This I cannot help; besides, the capacity to be shocked is not a quality to be encouraged, being rather a decadent quality than otherwise. After all, someone must do this dirty work of thinking and saying for the first time (aye, is it for the first time?) what hundreds of people are dying to think and say, if the phrase be not too paradoxical. When will people have the initiative, for instance, to put their feet down and say: "We heartily dislike the sound produced by violin unaccompanied?" The argument is that if such a genius as Bach thought it beautiful, that is good enough for "us." But wait a minute: would not Bach be soulfully distressed if he heard his chords arpeggiated in that highly disconcerting manner

which the modern violin bow forces its handlers to adopt? For I wonder how many people—indeed, how many violin virtuosos—are aware that the old bow was made in such a way (curved and with a possibility of slackening the hairs) that the chords did not need to be broken? Alas, change is not always progress, and when we talk of “all modern conveniences,” we forget to include several modern *inconveniences*.

But we have digressed for a moment during our little *causerie*. To return and add just a few words more anent the string-trio, the question is, will there come a day when we shall listen to those old trios with a renewed pleasure? And why not—since may not the day come when they, too, will sound so old as to sound new again? After all, it seems to be with music as it is with pictures; for I hear that in The London National Gallery, certain pictures are put away in the cellars for a time and then resuscitated. Thus, what is not appreciated in one age is appreciated in another; for the prerequisite to the awakening of appreciation towards a work is, that it must be very new—or very old. I know of a great painter, for instance, who loves Cimabue but heartily dislikes Raphael: the latter, forsooth, is not quaint enough!

### III

I alluded erewhile to the Haydn type of pianoforte-trio as a form of duet, even though it entailed three instruments; a fact which every observant student must have noticed for himself. He will equally have noticed that Beethoven considerably improved on this, as did also his successor Franz Schubert. But was Haydn merely careless in his treatment of this form or did he know no better? It is hard to say; but *apropos* of carelessness, there is an anecdote which runs that Beethoven, who was Haydn's pupil, chided the latter with some asperity for having left a mistake in his (Beethoven's) harmony exercise. Did the latter also chide *him* for not writing true trios? History does not relate. I think, however, a good many modern musicians chide him by not playing his works; preferring the trio by nature and not only by name. And yet one wonders why these ineffective trios exist, when his quartets were up to his prevailing standard of excellence; so “all that they should be,” indeed, that they leave us nothing to say on the matter. Nor would it profit us materially in connection with this *causerie* to scrutinize his followers along this line, the masterpieces of Beethoven and Schubert; all one might say of the latter in the shape of friendly criticism is that he failed to recognize at times that brevity which “is the soul of wit.” As to the quartets of the still later composer

Robert Schumann, it is curious to note that although he was a poor hand at writing intrinsically orchestral music, his chamber-works were singularly effective, and full of a dulcet charm. Strangely so, because as a rule the composer who has little sense for orchestral color, fails to produce the most effective chamber-music, as may be seen by a close and critical scrutiny of the works of Brahms. That Brahms wrote beautiful and meritorious music as such, few will deny, but that he always contrived to produce beautiful sounds is another matter. It is all too obvious that at times he wrote what has been not ill-described as *paper-music*—that is, music which when read by our mental ear looks beautiful of content, but when it comes to be played sounds hideous. Indeed, could there exist a more ill-sounding work than the last movement of the Sonata for 'cello and piano in E minor? Not altogether without reason have I heard this movement irreverently described as "cats' music" on account of the grunting and scratching produced by the quick, but ineffective writing for the 'cello in a totally unsuitable register. Read this work on paper, however, and musically it will be enjoyable. But, after all, as music is intended for performance and not for mere perusal, we must regard Brahms as being lacking in a very essential part of technique, or in a quality which is highly valuable to the tone-poet. It is true, I have picked out the worst example to be found among his many works; nevertheless, there is no denying that even when writing solely for the piano, Brahms indulged in thick bass-chords which sound far from esthetic. I have also heard it said by string-players engaged in rendering his quartets, quintets, etc., that it is only with the greatest difficulty they can make these works "come off." And I think the secret of his deficiency lay in the fact that his imagination was of that order which rendered him inadequately able to picture reality—he thought in music but not in pure sounds. It is, in fact, curious that one or two Germans have manifested this same deficiency, whereas to my knowledge *never* has a Frenchman. Bizet was an exquisite instrumentalist, or, shall I say, sound-colourist; the works of Ambroise Thomas and Gounod invariably "come off," such as they are; and Berlioz and César Franck, whether strictly French or not, may be added to the list, while the colour-talents of Chausson and Debussy are too well known for mention. The Russians and the immortal Pole, Chopin, had this same capacity, for even though the latter confined himself almost exclusively to piano writing, he used that instrument in the most well-sounding manner imaginable, and one previously unknown. To this list we may add Dvořák and Smetana, who also undoubtedly possessed a tone-colour sense in varying degrees.

We have now mentioned a fair number of deceased celebrities who have been drawn to the chamber-music form, but the list were not entirely complete without Felix Mendelssohn, for I, as probably many others, had almost forgotten his several works of this order. Still, in the days of my youth they were occasionally performed at the Frankfort Conservatoire concerts; those terrifying ordeals modestly termed "*Übungs-Abende*," which means Exercise Evenings, Practice-Evenings, or however one would most euphoniously translate it. Yes, terrifying ordeals, I repeat; for woe unto the student who really did *practise* on such an evening, and breaking down had to start again. Never has the "complete and turned out goods" in the shape of the fully equipped musician suffered from such nervousness, I warrant, as he or she did at those old Practice-Evenings. And what an audience for an as yet unripe executant to have to play before; comprising such celebrities as Madam Schumann, Hugo Becker, Hugo Heermann, Professor Stockhausen, and on one occasion even Anton Rubinstein.

But I have wandered again far afield, and now, after all this prelude to a few remarks on Mendelssohn as a chamber-music writer, there is very little to be said. I remember, however, that our professors, when they wished to favour me with a special confidence on the subject, used to allude to his mannerisms, especially certain writing of piano-passages of an arpeggio type, from which he was unable to free himself. Nevertheless, the Mendelssohn chamber-works were not deficient in *sounding* propensities, although, in these works, he never seems to have invented a novel effect, as he did in orchestral writing (though with the dust of years, so to speak, even his orchestral effects do not strike us as such nowadays). As to why one hears so little of Mendelssohn's chamber-music at the present time—well, the secret may lie in the ephemeral results of facility. Mendelssohn was a most facile writer. I have heard it said somewhere that he could get a whole work into his head before he wrote a single note down, and that, while he was actually engaged in writing it down, he could carry on a conversation. I admit, this story sounds a little "steep" and hardly credible, but, as there are Indian pundits or mental gymnasts who can actually think of twenty-eight different things at once, perhaps Mendelssohn had also been a bit of a pundit in a previous incarnation! Be that as it may, at any rate the result of such facility is that nowadays one hears (in my country), save for the "Elijah" and the ever-charming and delightful violin-concerto, very little of Mendelssohn, and personally I have not heard a single chamber-music work of his since those old days in the Conservatoire.

## IV

One is apt to imagine that the Russians, including Tchaikovsky, were the first to introduce "effects in chamber-music," but let us beware of this notion, since it may be entirely false. The truth is, as I already hinted, that an "effect" is only perceptible (with few exceptions) in the periods in which it is written. When the dust of years has dimmed its varnish, so to speak, it ceases to appeal to the listener as an effect at all; in other words, it has become embodied in the musical content. One hears, for instance, a great deal about the "effects" of the moderns and hyper-moderns, and when a critically minded person is itching to pick holes in works, as he invariably is (strange, how some people like to perform the office of worms), then he talks of So and so's incorrigible fondness for "effects," forgetting that every novel-sounding tone-colour cannot be anything else. It is in fact just this capacity to create new sound combinations in addition to new matter, which indicates the difference between the very greatest musical composers and the less great: the very great invents in all directions, the less great does *not*. It is true that a man may have a talent for sound-combinations alone, without the adjunct of true musical inspiration, and I am inclined to think that Berlioz furnishes us with an illustration of this sort, though one feels about his music at times, as if he had *deliberately* set about to think out new effects, irrespective of whether they were beautiful or not. Thus he gives us the impression of being too much of an experimentalist. However, let us be grateful to him. We owe him much; we indirectly owe to him some of the Wagnerian sublimities. And evidently Wagner *in his day* must have sounded full of effects, though nobody talks of his effect-production nowadays, for the reason already pointed out.

In a word then, we must go warily when we allude to the tone-colour of the modern and comparatively modern in contradistinction to that of the ancients. How can we be certain that the Mozart and Haydn quartets did not appeal to their listeners as equally novel in actual tone-colour as in musical content? Nay, who indeed shall say, since we can now only regard them with ears incapable of accurate retrospect?—"perverted ears," the old fogies would say, though as to that there are slight differences of opinion. We may safely state this much, however, that whereas each musical epoch has had its special characteristics—polyphony, melody, structure and so on—the characteristic of the present age is tone-colour, what has been termed by Frenchmen the *musique de sonorité*. Perhaps we may also say that as far as chamber-music goes, the Russians were

the first to embark on this colouristic adventure. Is there not a whole scherzo written in harmonics, by Borodin? And as to the Trios by Arensky and Tchaikovsky, are they not richer in sound than anything invented before them? I think the answer is certainly in the affirmative. These indeed were epoch-making trios, after which came an interval, until the record was again broken (to use a sporting term *à la* Percy Grainger) by that highly inventive Frenchman, Maurice Ravel.

With the mention of this remarkable man, we come to the chamber-music of the present day. Firstly, I do not hesitate to say that the Ravel Trio is a most astoundingly novel work of art in more directions than one—nay, in all directions. No more does he subscribe to the old trio form, but presents us respectively with a nameless *prelude*, a *pantoun*, a *passacaglia* and then a *finale*. Thus, to begin with, the form is novel; in addition, the harmony and polyphony are novel, while most novel of all is the sound-colouring: with the result that this work is very difficult; I recently heard an admirable performance of it in London by Miss May and Beatrice Harrison and Mr. Hamilton Harty. That Ravel must have a very intimate knowledge of stringed instruments is obvious, for it would almost seem as if he had drained them of all their possibilities.

If Ravel has proved himself a master of effects in this Trio, his string-quartet is equally rich in novel colour. It goes even Debussy one better in this direction. Indeed, I unhesitatingly say that the Ravel quartet *sounds* more remarkable than any hitherto penned, with the Debussy quartet not far behind in the running. And yet both these Frenchmen showed themselves latterly not content with the usual chamber-music combinations, and before his death, Debussy had conceived a scheme to write chamber-works of an entirely new nature. We have also Ravel's *Septet* for strings, wind, and harp, a most effective work.

Thus, finally, we come to what may be the future of chamber-music, and its latent possibilities for divers kinds of combinations. How charming, for instance, would a piece for flute, viola and harp be, or oboe, viola and harp. The harp, in fact, is not used enough in chamber-music, partly because of its incapacity for quick modulation, and, though this has now been overcome by the introduction of the chromatic harp, partly because a certain conservatism prevents people from using the chromatic harp, their excuse being that its tone is not as rich as that of the diatonic harp. Still, a very sonorous tone is not so necessary for chamber purposes, and I, for one, shall gladly see the day when other composers besides Debussy employ



this valuable new instrument. The clarinet is another instrument far too little used in chamber-music, even though Brahms tried to set the fashion. Our present-day music is highly suited to its employment, especially if harp be used instead of piano. Nor must we forget the horn, which likewise Brahms employed without finding many followers, in spite of all the great possibilities that offer themselves.

I am aware, of course, that there are certain practical reasons why it will be difficult to "popularize" unusual combinations, although there be quartet-parties who make a habit of practising together year in and year out; as soon as a great variety of instruments are required, difficulties immediately arise of a purely practical kind. An oboist or harpist considers himself an orchestral player, and at any rate in this country (England) is seldom available for any other purpose. Thus, when a chamber-work of an unsteretyped order is produced, it is invariably inadequately rehearsed. Therefore, what we shall require in the future, are wind players who make a point of being chamber-music performers before everything else; we need, in fact, more players after the type of Louis Fleury (flute), who never plays in orchestras at all. And I believe it must come to that eventually with the drift that chamber-music is taking in the hand of the moderns. For instance, I am glad to see that in America there is the New York Chamber Music Society embodying a number of wind instruments, though, as far as I know, no harp is added. I hope that there will be more such societies as time goes on to fulfill one of the demands of the coming age, for, although I do not contend that the string-quartet is "played out," and likely to be laid aside in the future, from a purely phonetic point of view it is by no means the most perfect combination. Looking at it with the most critical scrutiny, the volume of sound produced by the 'cello is "out of proportion" to that produced by the violin, with the result that unless very carefully manipulated it invariably comes too much to the fore. I have also noticed that when string-quartet players become very enthusiastic and passionate and "lay in for all they are worth," the result is apt to cease to be unadulterated music, and becomes more than tainted with an admixture of sheer noise. There is likely to be a scratching and a grunting of vehemently chastised strings which is anything but pleasant to the ear, and hence exceedingly disconcerting to all, except to the players themselves, who seem to be thoroughly enjoying the effects of their exertions. I am also constrained to add, that on these occasions the tonality becomes very dubious; which does not add to the beauty of the general effect. Some may regard what I here say as hypercriticism, especially

string-players themselves, but my honesty compels me to say it nevertheless.

As to using the voice in, or with, chamber-music, we have some excellent examples from the pen of Dr. Vaughan Williams, string-quartet and voice being, indeed, a charming combination. Also, such a device as voice and flute alone, has most poetical possibilities, if the music written be consistent, that is to say, sufficiently atmospheric. In fine, we are confronted with a whole new field of effects wholly or only very partially explored as yet, and well may we cry: "Composers, be daring, go in and win, explore the new regions; manifest the divine discontent which, though revering the old, ever seeks the new!"

# ERNEST BLOCH

By GUIDO M. GATTI<sup>1</sup>

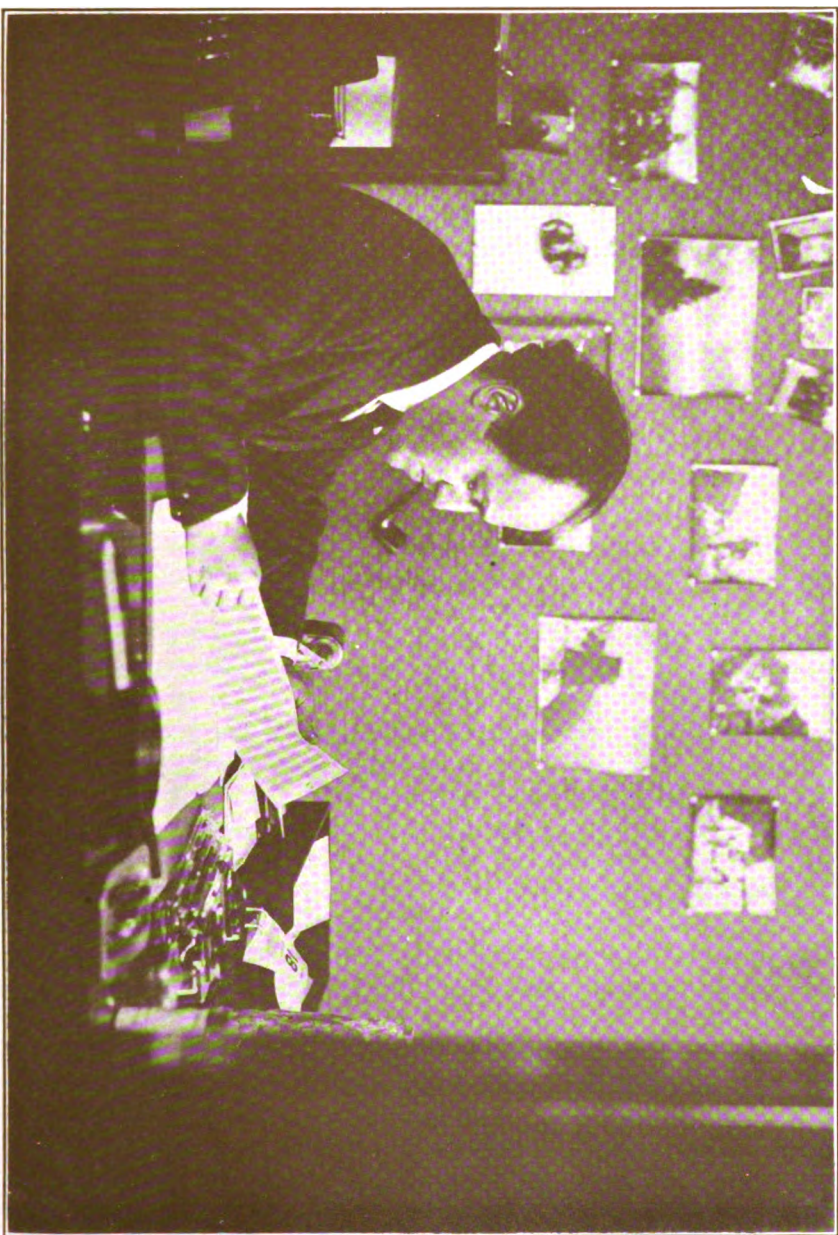
Le temps de la douceur et du dilettantisme est passé. Maintenant il faut des barbares.—*Ch.-Louis Philippe.*

FROM far-away America there reaches us the voice of a musician who is virtually unknown to the public of the old continent; it is a hale and hardy voice, prominent amid the multitude that swell the contemporaneous musical chorus—the voice of a man who cannot be classified as belonging to any given school or any given tendency; who stands by himself in splendid isolation; whom we feel to be a-quiver with our own agitation, and who at the same time is not a product of modern environment; who is both traditional and venturesome, primitive and modern. In a word, he is *some one* with *something* to say.

This man, who engages the attention of everybody in the transoceanic world, is a European; he was born in the heart of Europe and lived there until some four years past, ignored by the great majority, esteemed by a few artists and a few students. His musical output, abundant and estimable remained unpublished until yesterday, when a courageous and high-souled North American publisher brought it to public attention, and also assumed the initiative for its general introduction.

Ernest Bloch, a French Swiss, an exile from his country, is about to return to us after a long silence; but none of his pages has lost aught of its fascination during the time of expectancy. Whether to-day, or yesterday, or to-morrow, the art of Bloch lays hold on our feelings and insistently claims our attention; neither a product of fashion nor linked to the destinies of any faction, representing as it does a man and a race, it has not suffered in consequence of changes of taste. When listening to Bloch's music one seems to hear old echoes from eternity, from something within us that is revived only with the creation of a favorable atmosphere of exaltation and sincerity. Visions of majestic colonnades with statues gigantic and severe, of marble temples overladen with fine gilding and tapestries, of fabulous processions worthy of the Queen of Sheba, of all the biblical splendors; records

<sup>1</sup>By courtesy of the author reprinted from *La Critica Musicale*, April-May, 1920.



Ernest Bloch



of sacred tomes and of vanished wisdoms; heartache for times past; a rapt contemplation of elusive creatures resplendent as the sun and disdainful as the Sphynx; echoes of sacred dances, slow and voluptuous, within precincts saturated with the fumes of incense, of myrrh and cinnamon; fleeting sensations that leave, none the less, a deep trace and make themselves felt again, after the sound has died away, with tenacious obsession.

Of course, not all of Bloch's compositions with which we are acquainted are significant and valuable in the same degree; on the contrary, we can affirm without reserve that the works by which he *ought* to be known begin with the three *Hebrew Poems*, written in 1913—if we make an exception of *Macbeth*, certainly more interesting as a specimen of the music-drama than for maturity of intrinsically musical expression. (All of which was noted with particularity by Pizzetti in the first—and until now unique—study dedicated by Italian critics to the Genevese musician. But we shall return to *Macbeth*.) It might be affirmed, besides, that as Bloch's experience of life went on gathering new stores of sorrowful impressions, his musical expressiveness gathered substance and grew more and more robust, and asserted his rough and impetuous personality against every external influence. The years of more onerous physical toil, from 1906 to 1913, were practically void of creative effort; it was as though all impressions received from the exterior world were continually accumulating and condensing in the artist's mind. Years of harrowing crises, soul-searching and cleansing, in whose course there were doubtless many attempts at self-expression, though not one gave full vent to the tempest agitating the musician's spiritual life. There are certain characteristics of his maturity which are traceable in the earlier works as well; but these are scattered and inorganic, not integrated to constitute that positive esthetic figure which is manifested in full in the works of the Hebrew Cycle. Who cannot readily recognize, in *Schelomo*, melodic traits in common with the culminating scenes of the Shakespearian drama? Who would not identify, in the instrumentation of the Psalms or of *Schelomo*, the author of the instrumentation in the poems *Hiver* and *Printemps*, and in the first symphony? At present, surveying the road along which Bloch's compositions stand to mark the several stations in the development of his *aisthesis*, there is revealed to us the process (if we may so express it) by which this latter, while divesting itself little by little of the traces of foreign influence, raised to the highest potency and possibly aggravated the individual and

germinal notes. After successive clarifications, growing more and more refractory to extraneous elements, the personality of Bloch—constricted, as it were, with regard to the many-faceted manifestation of sensations and impressions—has formed itself compact and unmistakable, homogeneous and substantial. In the works of the Hebrew Cycle there is naught else than Bloch; in passing judgment one may admire or not, but one is constrained to recognize that these pages owe nothing to anybody. Like their author, they present a unified and provocative type.

The symphony in C sharp minor is the earliest work of Bloch's with which we are familiar (it was preceded by a symphonic poem, *Vivre--Aimer*, and a forgotten *Sinfonia orientale*); he wrote it at Munich between his twenty-first and twenty-second birthdays. Two movements of it were performed in the year following its composition at Basel, and later the entire work was brought out at Geneva by Stavenhagen. But the first *real* performance was that which took place in 1915, conducted by the author. Romain Rolland, who was present, wrote to Bloch:

Your symphony is one of the most important creations of the modern school. I do not know any other work in which is revealed a more opulent, a more vigorous, a more impassioned temperament. It is marvellous to think that one has to do with a first work. Had I known you at that time, I should have said: 'Pay no attention to the faultfinding and the praises and the opinions of others. You are your own master. Do not let yourself be turned aside or thrown off the track by anything. Go on expressing yourself in the same way, freely and fully; I guarantee that you will become one of the masters of our time.'

And, knowing neither the Psalms nor *Schelomo*, he was a true prophet, even though his cordial enthusiasm suggested the language of a friend rather than of a critic. This symphony of Bloch's really shows the qualities and defects of the youthful works—among these latter in particular a tendency to discursiveness, besides echoes of other personalities. "At that time (Bloch told us) I was neither completely myself nor completely independent"; and this may be excused in an artist hardly over twenty years of age. Thus the beauty of the work resides rather in the moving power of the formal construction, and in the ardent force of conviction that guides the composer to an unerring truthfulness of expression, than in the originality and lucidity of the musical ideas.

According to the author's intention, the symphony aims to delineate his life as a youth, with its struggles and hopes, its

joys and disappointments. The first movement, beginning *lento*, *poi agitato*, represents the tragedy of life—doubts, labors, hopes; the second, happiness and faith; the third, *vivacissimo*, and of a dolorous restlessness, portrays the ironies and sarcasms of mankind; the last interprets the triumph of the will and final serenity of mood.

Analogy of sentiment led the musician involuntarily to appropriate here and there celebrated passages of kindred inspiration; as when the orchestra is at times attracted by the fascination of Strauss's instrumentation. But even then the symphony was far more than a promise; the first movement, more particularly, is worthy of a place beside the most dramatic pages of Brahms, Mahler, and Bruckner.

The conception of *Macbeth* antedates the first representation of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and the work was finished the following year. These chronological details are not given to forestall a possible question with regard to derivation—anyone who has heard or read the *Macbeth* of Bloch knows what a disparity of conception sunders the two works—but to establish the almost contemporaneous appearance of two musico-dramatic compositions which I do not hesitate to coördinate, together with *Fedra* by Pizzetti, as assertions of a will to innovation in the contemporary music-drama. I hasten to explain my idea. *Pelléas* is, for me, a perfect work in every respect—in its total conception as a drama or as a musical realization of characters, of sentiments, and of scenes. Debussy labored for ten years on this masterwork, and attained maturity of expression after a long series of experiments. Contrariwise, neither *Macbeth* nor *Fedra* is a perfect work. Debussy finished his composition at forty; Bloch wrote the Shakesperian drama at the age of twenty-three; and Pizzetti began the creation of his work at twenty-nine and ended it three years later. Neither the one nor the other was then capable of giving us what they gave us in the sequel, especially in these latest years and in other fields; and what they assuredly will still give us to-morrow, the former with *Jezebel*, the latter with *Deborah*.

*Macbeth* ought, therefore, in our opinion, to be considered as a not wholly successful attempt in the field of musical drama, but nevertheless one which will always hold our interest and win a frequent hearing through the perfection of its dramatic expression. The work has compelled our consideration since our reading of it some years ago. Accustomed as we were to all the conventional melodramatism of the end of the nineteenth century; nauseated by the everlasting repetition of the forms and formulas



from which were constructed, after the fashion of a mechanical toy, the musical works of the ultimate Verdians, of the *veristi* and the Puccini-Massenet following; irritated by the indolence of the younger generation, who were incapable of facing—and still more so of solving—the dramatico-musical problems, while making instead a great show of chasing after success with an exploitation of every artistic and inartistic means;—then, after reading through Bloch's *Macbeth*, one felt oneself in the presence of something new and beautiful. And one had a feeling of keen delight, as on finally meeting a beloved and cherished friend after long and wearisome wandering among unprofitable and unsympathetic folk. In *Macbeth* we have, first and foremost, a musical drama; all is subordinated to that; we do not find—with one or two exceptions—musical episodes, that is to say, fragments, *hors-d'œuvres* which have a life of their own and, in consequence, possess a ponderable value when detached from the scene or the act; there are no compositorial self-indulgences to cause stagnation or deviation, and to distract attention from the development of the plot. Bloch follows the dramatic design with his every musical faculty; he is in the centre of the action and moulds the characters, and moves them, and endows them with sentient life, bearing in mind at every moment the necessities of the drama, leading up to its climax and dénouement with ever-increasing intensity.

The musical speech of *Macbeth* is of a fascinating simplicity. If we make exception of the two grand choral scenes which close, respectively, the first and last acts,—and in which Bloch discovers in full his wonderful skill as a contrapuntist and constructor—there is not a page which has not an appearance of leanness, beneath which, however, there lies an unsuspected emotional potency. A rhythmic figuration which repeats itself measure after measure like an inexorable fate; a harsh chord that gathers and spreads abroad like a presentiment; and, above them, a grave, sustained melodic declamation which seems disdainfully void of acoustic suavity, yet is incisive and expressive, and truly sympathetic to the word. Through these means Bloch creates atmospheres pregnant with meaning, comparable to those investing the drama of the two lovers in Debussy's opera, but with this difference (which, for the moment, is of chief importance): that within this atmosphere the personages lead a radically human life, and comport themselves under the influence of passion in a manner for which we find a parallel in certain conjunctures of our own lives, gravating themselves in a plastic relief which

renders them powerfully expressive of their soul-life. Whereas, with Debussy, the figures sometimes fade away, dissolving in the atmosphere and appearing, so to speak, like vague phantoms created by the very movement and color thereof, in Bloch's opera the dramatis personæ—and here I mean more particularly that terrible pair, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—stand out from their environment and dominate it, themselves at times even creating the atmosphere. Their volcanic spontaneity of intuition stamps them ineffaceably on the musical material; their bodies cast obscure and gigantic shadows; their voices have a vast resonance like the words of a man whom the drama has transported at a bound into the very heart of creation, and who, though still a mortal, thinks and speaks with the soul of a hero. Should I desire to point out the next of kin—in music—to Macbeth and his tragic spouse, I should have to seek them in the barbarous and michelangelesque drama of Modest Mussorgsky, in that primitive figure and—by reason of the complexity of his *pathos*—elusive personality, Boris Godounov. Certain scenes in *Macbeth*—for example, that culminating one of Duncan's murder, of which, though it passes off-stage, we see the living reflection in the face and the words of Lady Macbeth, with its terrible silences and the fearsome whisperings of the night, and the duet that follows agitatedly, by fits and starts, with spectral hallucinations ("Macbeth has murdered sleep!")—find their counterparts in certain scenes of the Russian drama, such as those of the convent and of the Tsar's death. This juxtaposition of Bloch and Mussorgsky assumes a noteworthy interest and importance, and we should dwell on it, were we not urged by impatience to enter upon the mature period of Bloch's work. Pizzetti, however, did dilate on *Macbeth* in his essay, which—like everything he writes—is acute; but, for obvious reasons, he did not tell us of the affinities that subsist between his drama and that of Bloch. Now, these affinities are numerous and of diverse character; they concern the man in his rounded-out conception of art, in his musicianship, and, in the specific case, in his intuitive grasp of the music-drama. A comparative study of the works of these two musicians, alike and unlike, yet born in the same year, though at an interval of a few days, would not be void of interest and would assume a character far more profound than that of a pure coincidence; but we must press on without further delay, though not without mentioning, in this connection, among the "Mussorgsky" numbers the Torture Scene and the Death of Fedra—pages which will be admired for many a long year.

For us the most prominent defect in Bloch's score is its comparative monotony in rhythm and harmony. The musician sometimes takes overmuch pleasure in the insistency of certain agogic figures and certain altered harmonies; to be sure, his intuition almost invariably seizes on the one or the other as an adequate expression of the momentary dramatic situation; but then he dwells and insists on it for too long a time; and it happens that the situation is left behind, while the symphonic commentary which it evoked still lingers. Syncopated figures, and duple times in triplet-rhythm, abound; the well-nigh continuous alternation of these two movements, while it may share in lending to the dramatic action that shade of gloom and depression which is in keeping with it, finally grows tiresome and develops a sense of immobility in scenes where the music ought to express progress. Moreover, the scarcity of vivid contrasts contributes to the levelling of the successive dramatic episodes; one is conscious of the absence of those violent shocks that occur so frequently in the later compositions—of those fantastic divagations which threaten at every step to capsize *Schelomo*, for example, while agitating the hearer with a swift and poignant emotion, or raising him of a sudden to the loftiest heights of lyricism. But whatever is lacking in *Macbeth*, although it may affect its musical value, in no wise diminishes its importance in the history of the musical drama, wherein Bloch's opera should be recorded among the two or three—till now—most significant specimens of their kind in the twentieth century.

The *Poèmes d'Automne* for voice are of decidedly minor importance; the individuality of Bloch, though sometimes emerging with its distinguishing features, especially in the vocal line, often strays into reminiscences of French lyrics, and discovers a mundane physiognomy bearing no resemblance to the musician's own. On the other hand, in the symphonic poems *Hiver* and *Printemps*, which are played in direct succession for the sake of contrast, we find the finest characteristics of Bloch the writer for orchestra—his calculated economy of sonorous power, the mellowness in the blending of timbres, the proneness to make of each instrument a living personality, and the clean-cut contours of the phrases confided to the solo instruments. Bloch's melody is never undulating, sinuous, pliant of outline (this man never insinuates himself into your soul by dint of flattery, but—if he can—overmasters it with violence); it is a melody which, even when sweet, melancholy and dolorous, is never tender. Even when (as in the symphonic poem *Hiver*) the principal theme

of the English horn tends to create an atmosphere of lifeless desolation, to depict a gloomy and mournful landscape. Bloch's sadness of heart is that of his race, recalling and invoking their native land in the Babylonian captivity. It is a fervent longing, a striving which, however impotent, is resolute, an energetic and centripetal concentration of spirit. It is not, therefore, the vagueness of a confused dream, or the crepuscular aspiration for the remote, for the fantastic and unreal. Bloch's instrumental themes—the more so because of their strongly vocal type—give us the impression of pouring from the heart of a priest or prophet, in whose voice the people hearken to the eternal verities and recognize the true end of life.

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The *Hebrew Poems* ("Trois poèmes juifs") constitute, as the author himself has stated, the initial opus of a new period, which consequently begins in 1913. This new period, now still running its course, includes the works of the Hebrew Cycle down to the *Israel* symphony and the opera *Jezebel* (in preparation), together with the string-quartet, though this seemingly does not belong to it.

This great cycle claims the appellation "Hebrew," not because Bloch employs Hebraico-Oriental themes and modes in the works of which it is constituted, but for a much profounder reason, which he himself communicated to us:

I do not propose or desire to attempt a reconstruction of the music of the Jews, and to base my works on melodies more or less authentic. I am no archæologist. I believe that the most important thing is to write good and sincere music—*my own* music. It is rather the Hebrew spirit that interests me—the complex, ardent, agitated soul that vibrates for me in the Bible; the vigor and ingenuousness of the Patriarchs, the violence that finds expression in the books of the Prophets, the burning love of justice, the desperation of the preachers of Jerusalem, the sorrow and grandeur of the book of Job, the sensuality of the Song of Songs. All this is in us, all this is in me, and is the better part of me. This it is which I seek to feel within me and to translate in my music—the sacred race-emotion that lies dormant in our souls.

And when "Jews" are spoken of, I would add "ancient." Bloch seems descended, not from the tribes of Israel dispersed throughout the world, despised and neglected, who are silently perfecting their terrible weapons, patience, persistency and astuteness, but from the free sons of Judah, Asiatic shepherds, wandering from pasture to pasture, to-day masters and to-morrow slaves,

joyous voluptuaries of life and adorers of a warrior-god, the enemy and destroyer of all rival peoples. Nowadays, such a race is inconceivable; it exists only as a splendid tradition. Of this tradition, which he has felt reawakening within himself with the fervency of a live and urgent necessity, Bloch has fashioned the hero of his cycle; and for this reason he ought to be considered as the first, and perhaps the sole, *Jewish musician* that the history of music affords us. (Per contra, there exist many *musicianly Jews* more or less influenced by certain melodico-rhythmic traits of Hebrew origin; from Mendelssohn to Meyerbeer, from Rubinstein to Carl Goldmark, from Ferdinand Hiller to Mahler, the last-named possibly the most characteristic from this point of view. But none of these reveals so pregnant a racial personality as that of Bloch; in the artistic line they all appear like descendants of Mendelssohn, *ce notaire élégant* of Debussyan memory.)

But now, having established this characteristic of the esthetic figure which is Bloch, further insistence on it would be ill advised. For this would tend to establish at the same time, to a certain degree, a limitation, a constraint, that the works of Bloch do not show; in their broader expression these works stir the heart by typically human characteristics, by a universality of *pathos*, which do not readily lend themselves to classification. For the rest, one cannot contend that Bloch will still continue to reveal so convincingly certain racial traits; from a man of forty, in the full vigor of his creative powers, there may be expected any day a work exhibiting some predominant feature of a different sort; of this, we may add, some symptoms are already discernible in the *Suite* for viola, one of his most recent compositions.

*Danse—Rite—Cortège funèbre*—these are the titles of the three Hebrew Poems for orchestra. In the first there is a great display of colors, from the most vivid to the dullest, seen through a series of reflexes and opalescent veils; the employment of Oriental modes and of certain muffled sonorities lends now and again a sense of sensual languor which well expresses the mystico-voluptuous character of the Hebrew dance, while generating a dim, mysterious background therefor. The *Rite* is of a more emotional character, notwithstanding the presence of "something solemn and remote, as in ritual ceremonies." In it Bloch incorporated scenes of sacerdotal gravity, wherein, as against a scenario of golden ornaments and richly decorated hangings, the sacred words of the Celebrant slowly ascend. For in the *Rite* we already find that broad phrasing, full of majesty and meaning, which later forms one of the finest peculiarities of *Schelomo*.

To these two preceding compositions, of an eminently decorative character, is adjoined the dolorous finale of the *Funeral Procession*, wherein there is only sorrow, an infinite sense of dismayful grief. Written on the death of his father, it might bear as epigraph the biblical sentence, "If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Here we find another of Bloch's characteristics—the already noted insistency of a rhythmic figure, as if it were intended to arouse an impression of the fatality which looms up and runs its course without heed to the supplications of mankind. The third Hebrew Poem forms one crescendo from the beginning to the moment of eternal separation, when sorrow finds expression in the most despairing and insensate outcries; yet there enters one ray of light to penetrate the gloom (a tender melody, serene and chaste) and pour the balm of resignation. The earthly part dies, but the spirits of our dear ones remain with us; the more we loved them, the nearer will they be, in silent communication with our hearts; the greater our despair at their death, the deeper the consolation they give us for all the tears we shed. This sublime lirico-evangelical admonishment is set forth on the final pages of the *Cortège funèbre* with all the warmth of firm conviction.

The musician drew his inspiration directly from the verses of the Bible for the three next-following works—three *Psalms* for one voice with orchestra. Edmond Fleg, the composer's excellent and faithful collaborator, adapted (with certain textual liberties) three masterpieces of Jewish poetry, Psalms cxiv, cxxxvii and xxii. In them all there reverberates the leonine voice of the people of Israel, and towers the majesty of the race; the musician reawakens the sensations of vehement expansion and energetic speech which we have already noted as peculiarly his own. Bloch's imagination revels in many-figured, animated frescos, in limitless landscapes teeming with impassioned life. When he composes for the pianoforte—and this came to pass, originally, only in the *Poèmes d'Automne* and in the *Suite* for viola, which he straightway hastened to clothe in a symphonic vestment—one feels the orchestra; the pianoforte, that most perfect medium for the creation of an atmosphere of intimacy and delicate coloring, does not suffice him for portraying the vast complex of his visions. Consider for a moment the picture represented by Psalm cxxxvii. The Jewish people, captive in Babylon, is discovered along the banks of the river; hanging their harps on the branches, they weep for Jerusalem. And the people of the oppressor require of them songs of mirth. "How shall we

sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!" And again: the immense assemblage rise suddenly to their feet, with arms upraised in frenzied agitation imploring and conjuring their God: "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, *Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof*. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!"—This scene, of which only the biblical verses can bring home to us a vivid conception in its crude realism, and which Michelangelo alone might have depicted with his terrible artistry, Bloch's music succeeds in expressing in admirable relief. Fashioned, as it is, of violent contrasts, of well-nigh brutal alternations of sonority, fitful and exclamatory, it attains a vivid immediacy of dramatic emotion. Its asymmetries, its angulosities, its barbaric simplicities, even its rhythmic monotony and its insufficient variety of harmonic combinations, all aid it in matching the power of the biblical narrative.

And there is still another point on which we should dwell. Bloch's more recent music is not interesting music, in that acceptance of the term which is general among us students of modern music; one does not savor its harmonic subtleties or instrumental refinements on reading it from the printed page; on hearing it, one is moved by its impetus. Bloch's technics are extremely modern; he quite calmly allows himself certain liberties which neither Schönberg nor Strawinski nor Casella ever dreamt of taking. Yet his compositions cannot be called *ultra-modern*, perhaps because the heterodox elements in his mode of expression are in themselves not important, but are founded on those which I will term *traditional*, using the word without any shade of depreciation. Certain tonal shocks, certain brusque shifts of tonality, do not surprise us, for they seem quite natural and logical in music like that of Bloch, barbaric and refractory. All in all, the exceptionality of his speech—either with regard to the harmony or to the rhythmic designs—does not strike us as *provoked* (we do not say *designed*) by an excess of refinement and intellectualism, as in many a page by contemporaries, but, as it were, by a primigenial instinct impatient of bonds and conventions. The music of many moderns seems to us beyond the school; that of Bloch, before it. The former has no memory of its past and attempts the construction of a future; the latter has no past, but is radiant with the youth of uncultured

and happy peoples without a history. Of these it possesses all the defects and all the qualities; even the defects are engaging, for they are ingenuous and calculated to set the good qualities in a stronger light. The level monotony of the background, at times exasperating, makes the fiery transcurSION of certain melodic exclamations stand out in marvellous relief, emblazoned thereon like arabesques of lightning against nightly skies.

Bloch has reached the perfection of *his* music with the Hebrew rhapsody for solo violoncello with orchestra, which bears the name of the great king *Schelomo* (Solomon). In this, without taking thought for development and formal consistency, without the fetters of a text requiring interpretation, he has given free course to his fancy; the multiplex figure of the founder of the Great Temple lent itself, after setting it upon a lofty throne and chiseling its lineaments, to the creation of a phantasmagorical entourage of persons and scenes in rapid and kaleidoscopic succession. The violoncello, with its ample breadth of phrasing, now melodic and with moments of superb lyricism, now declamatory and with robustly dramatic lights and shades, lends itself to a reincarnation of Solomon in all his glory, surrounded by his thousand wives and concubines, with his multitude of slaves and warriors behind him. His voice resounds in the devotional silence, and the sentences of his wisdom sink into the hearts as the seed into a fertile soil: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. . . . He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."—The orchestra palpitates in all the colors of the rainbow; from the vigorous and transparent orchestration there emerge waves of sound that seem to soar upward in stupendous vortices and fall back in a shower of myriads of iridescent drops. At times the sonorous voice of the violoncello is heard predominant amid a breathless and fateful obscurity throbbing with persistent rhythms; again, it blends in a phantasmagorical paroxysm of polychromatic tones shot through with silvery clangors and frenzies of exultation. And anon one finds oneself in the heart of a dream-world, in an Orient of fancy, where men and women of every race and tongue are holding argument or hurling maledictions; and now and again we hear the mournful accents of the prophetic seer, under the influence of which all bow down and listen reverently. This vivid coloration is lost in the passage from the orchestra to the pianoforte; in the pianistic transcription the designs, the sketches,



one might say, of this immense panorama remain; yet the central figure still retains features of the highest interest. The violoncello-part is of so remarkably convincing and emotional power that it may be set down as a veritable masterpiece; not one passage, not a single beat, is inexpressive; the entire discourse of the soloist, vocal rather than instrumental, seems like musical expression intimately conjoined with the Talmudic prose. The pauses, the repetitions of entire passages, the leaps of a double octave, the chromatic progressions, all find their analogues in the Book of Genesis—in the versicles, in the fairly epigraphic reiteration of the admonitions (“and all is vanity and vexation of spirit”), in the unexpected shifts from one thought to another, in certain *crescendi* of emotion that end in explosions of anger or grief uncontrolled.

The statement of characteristics which has just been made, and which results from an examination of the greater part of Bloch's works—namely, that this is never “absolute music,” that it does not present itself as a simple outpouring of sonority, but always claims to have a precise meaning, to interpret the rhythms of spoken language or of the emotions—appears to be contradicted by the advent of a recent quartet, which is indeed one of the finest things the Genevese musician has written. Yet such is not the case; even in this form, *the purest* of all, we discover unmistakable traces of Bloch's *aisthesis* (akin to that of Mussorgski in this respect, as well), magnetically attracted toward the dramatized word and toward that instrumental declamation that we noticed in *Schelomo*. Even in this quartet we do not experience the physical pleasure afforded by the harmonic coexistence and interpenetration of the parts, or by the brilliant fusion of the timbres of the several instruments; but we have the sensation of hearing voices that appeal to us by diverse characteristics, but are always essentially dramatic and expressive of emotions. Even in the quartet we are again haunted by this constant conception of a drama, for the musician never takes delight in constructing for the pleasure of hearing the four instruments *sound well*. Bloch carried over into the quartet those same objectives and those same expressions which he employed in the *Psalms* and in the musical drama; he did not bend to the requirements and conventions of the form, but sought to mould it to his will. In this he was not invariably successful, his already noted excesses of musical speech being here yet more clearly revealed. (In this there is, of course, no intention whatever to depreciate the technical value of the composition, which is

Serif et solennel (Adagio molto) 1<sup>re</sup> version 88-89 Symphonie "Israël" Dikla de -

Handwritten musical score for "L'Enfant et le diable" by Maurice Strakosky. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for various instruments and voices. The title "L'Enfant et le diable" is written in a decorative font at the top. The score is in 3/4 time and features a variety of musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The instruments listed on the left include Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Snare Drum, Cymbal, Triangle, Tom-tom, Bass Drum, and Double Bass. The vocal parts are for a Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. The score is written in a single system with multiple staves for each instrument and voice part. The music is in a key of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and has a tempo marking of "Allegretto". The score is handwritten and shows signs of being a working draft, with some corrections and annotations visible.

**Facsimile of two pages from Ernest Bloch's score of his symphony Israel**

1.2  
3.4  
Fl. 1  
Fl. 2  
Cl. in B $\flat$   
Bsn.  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cor Ang.  
Trpt. 1  
Trpt. 2  
Hrn. 1  
Hrn. 2  
Vl. 1  
Vl. 2  
Vla.  
Vcl.  
Cb.

*Allegro*  
*Andante*

*f*  
*p*  
*cresc.*  
*dim.*  
*rit.*  
*V*  
*C*

*marcato*

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very great, and once again demonstrates—as though that were necessary—Bloch's assured mastery of the means of expression.) Concerning the emotional content of the quartet the composer has disclosed his program, which we present below, without, however, attaching special importance to it. The complex of the conception represents (to tell it in his own words), *the direct expression of my feelings, of my view of the world; it is a part of my life, a reflex of my joys and of my sufferings.* The first movement is a lament of *purely Hebraic inspiration, a blending of bitterness, of impassioned violence, and of anguish;* the second describes *a vision of human obliquity, the mouthings of perverse passions and the horrors of a desperate strife;* the third movement, of a pastoral character, represents a reverie *amid the sublimities of Nature, eternally true and consolatory;* while the finale returns to the visions of strife, and concludes in a resigned pessimism.

The question whether the composition communicates, more or less, the sensations of these four psychological phases, interests us up to a certain point; nowadays it is an admitted fact that in music every one finds what he is capable of feeling or disposed to feel. And some find nothing in it—the fault being sometimes their own, and sometimes that of the author, who put nothing into it.—What is beyond all question is, that Bloch's quartet merits a place beside *Schelomo* as constituting one more proof of the musician's genial creative power, and so makes the ignorance of European audiences with regard to his best work seem the more deplorable to us—that is, their ignorance of that which, as we have seen, had its inception in the *Hebrew Poems*, and whose latest examples (with which we are not acquainted) are the symphony *Israel*, the opera *Jezebel*, on which Bloch has been working for some years, and the *Suite* for viola which took the Coolidge prize and was performed, according to the conditions of the competition, at last year's Berkshire Festival with most triumphant success. On the strength of American criticism, furthermore, we stated that this *Suite* marks a new orientation in the composer's art and makes us look forward to his future with ever-increasing confidence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This much discussed Suite was first played, in its original version for viola and piano, by Louis Bailly and Harold Bauer at Pittsfield, Mass., on September 27, 1919. Even those who disliked the suite could not but admire the superlatively artistic performance. The suite was played for the first time in New York, at Æolian Hall, November 18, 1919, by Emil Ferrir and Harold Bauer who rejoined Louis Bailly for the second New York performance before the Society of the Friends of Music in January, 1920. The first performances of the suite in its version for viola and orchestra took place with Louis Bailly as soloist at concerts of the National Symphony Orchestra under Artur Bodansky at Carnegie Hall, New York, on November 5 and 7, 1920. The very

Bloch's music—and never, as in the present case, could it be spoken of as the complex of all his compositions, without making distinctions and classifications—possesses the character of the man; it is a music practically lacking in suavity and adornment; it seems rough-hewn with a chisel from a rude block of granite. Its lines are not smoothly bent, nor do they stretch out in soft curves, nor do they voluptuously seduce the sense by the fascination of grace; Bloch's music grips you and shakes you; it seizes you like a savage and sways you at will. His music makes you suffer; it is the expression of an intense nature that gave ear to it, and it is the most faithful and forceful expression of the impression made on one by hearing or reading Bloch's compositions. In *Schelomo*, in the *Psalms*, there are no twilight lassitudes or languors of tenderness; the music of Bloch does not know the meaning of that Verlainesque phrase uttered to evoke within us a sort of voluptuous stupor, an artificial paradise wherein the senses grow dull and a soothing atmosphere enfolds us and allures us into dreaming and the extinction of Nirvana. Bloch's music reveals to us the tragic meaning of life; it unrolls before us the eternal panorama of the world, where warring

difficult score received a reading which other violists, conductors and orchestras will find it hard to surpass.

These memorable performances again sharply divided those who profess to be bored and repelled by what they call Bloch's cacophony and general musical ugliness and those whom this suite deeply moves with its fantastic but logical imagination, its uncompromising sincerity and individuality of utterance, its uncanny technique—and its beauty. To be sure, not the beauty of a "deutsch romantisches Gefühl" which, as Edward J. Dent correctly claims, persists in controlling the likes and dislikes of most of us, but beauty, nevertheless. (The third movement is of sublime beauty and sustains with marvelously calculated nocturnesque orchestral colors a euphony which only deaf prejudice can deny.) The Suite was conceived with the Orient as back-ground. Not the Orient of Goethe's "West-östlicher Divan" but of the darker-skinned East of Java and beyond. That accounts for Bloch's weird and fantastic orchestral "adjectives," ejaculations and "cacophonies" which apparently so irritated many of our concert-goers who never notice anything "ugly" in the orchestra of, for instance, Schumann's otherwise lovely symphonies. Such persons, from time immemorial, have rebelled against any new and piercing sonority that takes them by surprise. They are irritated and forthwith condemn the whole work as a personal insult. Unfamiliarity, too, it would seem, breeds contempt. It is likewise true that most of us who in their youth fought and bled for the then unfamiliar, sooner or later reach the age when we need a rejuvenating gland, for which—alas!—our ever increasing, reverential love of the classics is not an infallible, enlightening substitute.

There still exist lovers of literature whom the beauty of Poe's "Masque of the Red Death," "King Pest" or "The Conqueror Worm" shocks into epithetic fits of disgust; so there ever will be lovers of music in whom daring works of genius like Bloch's Viola Suite will release all the synonyms of "ugly" in their vocabulary. Whether or not the orchestral version of the suite be preferable to the original version with piano, is a matter of taste. In certain spots the original version sounds more convincing than the orchestral—and *vice versa*, but space forbids to analyze the reasons for this opinion. The essential fact remains that in either version Ernest Bloch has given us the greatest work for viola in musical literature, and what is more important, one of the most significant and powerful works of our time.—Ed.

passions clash and on the horizon hovers the dazzling red of a conflagration continually renewed, that fitfully illumines the fatal struggle of humankind.

This Hebrew does not see the happenings amidst which he is living. It seems as though he had lived always, and had already sung in the reign of the son of David. His art appears anachronistic, because it is eternal; its idioms may appear emphatic and magniloquent if we measure them by the standard of our social practices, of our conventions, of our mediocre egoisms and pygmy hypocrisies.

The times in which we live, those of my generation—that is, of the generation which is about to arrive at its thirtieth year—have produced a Debussy and a Bloch; and never has a more striking contrast appeared to one who is familiar with the works of these two musicians. But Debussy is much more representative of his period; if one were to name the musical admirable Crichton of the vicennium preceding the world-war, he would have to say, without hesitation, Debussy. A vicennium of bewilderment and expectancy; anxious, pallid years; an epoch of crises of volition, and of the weakening (even the negation) of ethical values.

Bloch's period of fruition synchronizes almost exactly with the tremendous conflict whereby the world has been convulsed and overturned as by a terrific earthquake; can this signify that the new epoch is beginning, and that, in matters musical, Bloch is to be its leader? To affirm this seems venturesome; and yet we venture to do so, so many are the signs and tokens which present themselves to confirm us in our idea.

Certain it is, that the immensity of the drama whose final scene has not yet been shown, the primordial grandeur of the struggle for the hegemony of the world, the revulsion of mankind to elemental passions goaded to an unheard-of paroxysm, and, finally, the ostentatious disdain for every acquired habit of a refined and cultivated community, find echoes and utterance in the most forceful pages of the Genevese musician. In them we recognize that musical expression which best succeeds in conveying the impressions of the life unfolding all around us; in them we descry the lightnings of the tempest, we hear the fierce voices of men hurled one against the other in furious turmoil;—and we listen to the voice of God, that reaches us through a rift in the clouds and renews our faith in life.

To-day it seems to us that Bloch's creative activity has thrown off its shackles; his affirmation of will and of strength

awakens echoes in our inmost souls, shaken by the tempest; his musical speech, that yesterday told of the storm, is to-day an expression of the necessity for our introspective refreshment at the wellsprings of all spiritual life, and for the wholesome development of our spiritual natures and of intellects capable of sane and fruitful thinking.

If it be indispensable—as it is—to be immersed body and soul in the life we are living, and at the same time to nourish one's self on the substance of the past, new senses will be needed for interpreting the world, a new language free from all trammels for expounding its ultimate meaning. Yes, in very truth: *il nous faut des barbares!*

#### BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The life of this musician is not devoid of interest to any one who devotes himself to the study of his works; it will, therefore, be opportune to describe it here at some length.

Ernest Bloch, of Hebrew parentage, was born at Geneva, July 24, 1880; his father was a clock-merchant. None of his family had pursued musical studies or had shown any special aptitude for the art of tones. The boy began by studying the violin in his native town, but at the age of eleven he decided to devote himself entirely to composition. He made a solemn vow to do so; this vow he wrote down on a sheet of paper which he burned in the open air on a heap of stones, as if carrying out a rite of his people. Naturally, he encountered the opposition of his parents, but he nevertheless succeeded in repairing to Brussels (violin with Schorg and Isaye, composition with Rasse). and later to Frankfort, where he entered the school of Ivan Knorr. He passed something over a year at Munich under Thuille, then two at Paris, and returned to Geneva in 1904.

As usually happens—and it would have been a wonder if, in the case of a musician of Bloch's talent, matters had gone otherwise—no one cared to interest himself in him or his works; orchestra directors and concert managers equivocally “took under advisement” the scores of the unknown writer, who—it should be added—was not of a temperament to seek favor insistently or to resort to indirect means for the accomplishment of his object. Bloch was not excessively perturbed, his tenacious will and a characteristic spirit of fatalism sustained him then and thereafter, even when destiny was still more cruelly opposed. His father's affairs were rapidly becoming difficult, a doubtful future was impending

over the musician and his family. And all at once Bloch begins to sell cuckoo-clocks; he takes entire charge of the slender paternal interests, learns in brief space the science of commercial accounts, and commercial laws and customs, travels in Germany as salesman and agent for his goods, is daily absorbed in business. Meantime he was working on his *Macbeth*; in November, 1910, the opera was produced at the Opéra-Comique, and Bloch hastened to Paris, remaining there for the time required to assist at the rehearsals and to attend the representation. Chauvinistic criticism regarded it askance; it was a public success, but the clans of his Parisian colleagues consigned the work to the tomb. Bloch philosophically returned to Geneva and resumed his dual rôle of administrator and artist.

During this period (1909-10) he conducted the concerts at Lausanne and Neuchâtel; after two years his post was taken by one of his pupils. Bloch did not wax profane; he assisted at the new conductor's rehearsals, and aided him with his advice. In the following year he was chosen professor of composition and esthetics at the Conservatory of Geneva, but in 1915 he was dispossessed of that function. He retired without animosity, and fell back on his work.

His compositions were brought out for the first time in Switzerland, but the name of Bloch did not pass the frontiers; for Europe he is to-day—we repeat it—virtually unknown.

But Bloch clings, above all, to his freedom. He is a man of fantastic pride; he cannot be tamed by hunger. If Fortune does not come, he will not go in search of her. He submitted himself to the most onerous toil to gain a livelihood for himself and his family; but no one has made him swerve by a hair's breadth from his path. He knows whither he would go—or, rather, he knows what he can do, and does it; to him nothing else matters.

In America, where his genius is celebrated and his works are continually performed, he arrived as a man unknown, at the head of the orchestra accompanying Maude Allan, the dancer; from Ohio he came to New York without a penny, without friends, with nothing whatever, and he sought nothing of any one. His compositions have made their way on their own merits. In America there exists a cult of such fighters of tough fibre, of such monolithic men whose moral stature is of a sort that towers above the crowd. And when the crowd recognizes them, it perforce bows down before them and worships them as gods.

Of Bloch's compositions listed below, those with an asterisk have been published or will be published shortly by the New York house of



G. Schirmer, both in full orchestral score and in piano score. *Macbeth* alone is the property of G. Astruc & Cie and printed by Enoch & Cie of Paris.

1896—*Orientale*, symphonic poem.

1900—*Vivre-Aimer*, symphonic poem.

1902-2—Symphony in C sharp minor.

1903-6—*Macbeth*, lyric drama in a prologue and three acts. Book by Edmond Fleg (after Shakespeare). First performed in Paris, at the Opéra-Comique, Nov. 30, 1910.

1905—\**Hiver-Printemps*, two symphonic poems.

1906—\**Poèmes d'Automne* (B. Rodès), for voice and piano:

1. La Vagabonde.

2. Le Déclin.

3. L'Abri.

4. Invocation.

1913—\**Trois Poèmes juifs*, for orchestra:

1. Danse.

2. Rite.

3. Cortège funèbre.

1912-14—\*Two Psalms (adapted from the Hebrew by E. Fleg), for soprano and orchestra (or piano):

1. Psalm 114.

2. Psalm 137.

1916—\**Schelomo* (Solomon), Hebrew rhapsody for violoncello and orchestra (or piano).

\*Psalm 22 (adapted from the Hebrew by E. Fleg), for baritone and orchestra (or piano).

\*String-quartet in B minor.

1916-18—\**Israel*, symphony in F.

1916-?—*Jezebel*, lyric drama, book by E. Fleg (in preparation).

1918-19—\*Suite for viola and piano (or orchestra). Took the Coolidge prize in 1919.<sup>1</sup>

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)

<sup>1</sup>To this list must be added the Violin Sonata of 1920. The composer is also said to be composing a pianoforte concerto. Contrary to the belief of his distinguished Italian critic, the life of Ernest Bloch has not been a bed of roses in America of which country he has become a naturalized citizen. Recognition, sweetened by more or less intelligent opposition, there has been indeed, but also the struggle to make a living as teacher and conductor. It is to be hoped that the recent appointment of Ernest Bloch as organizer and director of the new Cleveland conservatory will not interfere with his creative work as a composer. In saying this, I have in mind the experience of noted American scholars who became college presidents and whom administrative problems compelled to abandon creative work.—Ed.

## ARE THE CLASSICS DOOMED?

By D. C. PARKER

**A**RE the classics doomed? If we ask this question it is because there is a current of unrest in some quarters which it would be futile to ignore. The modern spirit of enquiry is abroad and no mere sentimental consideration is permitted to arrest its activities. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and many others on whose brows History has set the laurel wreath of wisdom and heroism are subjected to a close scrutiny by those with new ears and new eyes. There is nothing alarming in this. Every reasonable person knows that the verdict of competent criticism is more to be desired than the fulsome flattery of assumption, and the masters will leave the hands of the most rigorous expert with plenty of virtue to their credit. We can understand the man who says in effect, "I have been told Beethoven is a great composer. I am not content with what I have been told. I am going to put the assertion to proof." But we have to face a kind of impatience or dissatisfaction that is manifesting itself at the present time. What are you going to say to the man who tells you that Bach is a bore, Mozart trivial, Schubert sugary, Beethoven tedious?

What we must do, I think, is to search for the cause of this sense of dissatisfaction. Is it in the man himself? If it be due to an obvious inability to recognise a good thing, there is nothing more to be said. If it be not, we have to trace the feeling of disappointment to its source. This, I believe, is to be attributed in many cases to the effect of modern music on certain temperaments. The music of these times is ubiquitous. Of necessity, criticism is largely concerned with composers whose works provide ample texts and are prolific in critical interest. Stravinsky, Schönberg, Grainger, Strauss, Ravel, Delius, Casella—the commentator finds a multitude of themes to discuss in connection with their art. Along with this goes, in various centres, frequency of performance. So some people keenly alive to the value and interest of contemporary music are quite naturally influenced by it. What to the rigid conservative is chaos is not chaos to them. What seems daring to the mandarin is to the explorer the merest commonplace. The quickness of thought, the freedom of form, the tossing aside of *clichés*—with all of these the eager student of modernism is

thoroughly at home. The appearance of the unexpected does not disturb his equanimity, for he expects the unexpected. The disdain of convention troubles him not at all, for unconventionality is itself a convention.

We have to imagine one immersed in and much affected by a study of the modern bards listening to Schubert's C major Symphony, or the C minor of Beethoven. He may tell us that Schubert is leisurely. The composer takes a long time to tell his story. We can often anticipate what is to come. The variety and attractiveness of up-to-date scoring are not present to speed the work on its way. To get anything out of this situation it is necessary to remember that appreciation is a very subtle thing. To examine the *rationale* of appreciation would necessitate a lengthy *excursus* which cannot here be permitted. But it may be assumed that appreciation is of three kinds, intellectual, sensuous, and intellectual and sensuous. Intellectual appreciation fails because music is an emotional art and the ultimate test of any composer is his power of song. If a composer have no wings he cannot by any reckoning be called great. To say this is not by any means to say that intellectual appreciation does not bring thrills of its own. Sensuous appreciation is that of people who are content to allow music to play upon them, to excite or otherwise affect them; they have no curiosity concerning it, no desire to find out how the effect of this or that is obtained. There remains that kind of appreciation which is a delicate blend of mind and soul, the kind of appreciation which neither makes of music a mechanical affair, nor yet regards it as an intoxicant. The difficulty of touching this point with advantage is substantially increased by the fact that in appreciation apprehension plays a large and important part. The artistic nature knows that such and such a thing is right, and this knowledge is founded on an instinct and cannot be proved by mathematics.

It is plain, then, that music is largely what we bring into its presence. The "approach" is always a vital matter and if we listen to the classics we must listen without vain preoccupation. It is foolish to expect the *tempo* of the twentieth century from the nineteenth, the melody of Wagner from Mozart, the mood of the romanticists from the contrapuntists, the scoring of Liszt or Rimsky-Korsakoff from Haydn. The literary man knows very well that the vocabulary of Chaucer is not that of Henry James, the style of Shakespeare not that of Barrie. But he does not judge the earlier writers from the standpoint of the later, and one has no right to judge the classics from the standpoint of the moderns.

There is a unanimity in all human effort, as Emerson remarked. Ultimately all good musicians meet on common ground, in that they seek to express that which is in them. It is the methods of expression which differ, and allowance ought surely to be made for this simple fact. One must, consequently, be aware of the temper of the age, the master-thought of the time, the prevailing customs, the means at the disposal of the composer, if one is to do him justice. Without the exercise of the historical sense it is difficult to see how the musician can arrive at any accurate assessment of writers, whether of the past or the present.

Do we compromise when we ask for the exercise of this historical faculty? I do not think so. What does the intelligent person expect from Mozart or Beethoven? Obviously what Mozart or Beethoven has to give. If you are not unreasonable in your demand, you ought to find some grounds for satisfaction. This notwithstanding, the objection may be put forward that in spite of all the talk about environment and the spirit of the time, the music of the classicists is, frankly, dull. One must be sure that, in saying this, one has given it the benefit of approaching it with "a clean slate." There is the larger view which if a man possess he will not allow himself to be robbed of many riches by a conspiracy of circumstance. He will not allow himself to be robbed of the past because he has penetrated the secret of the present. He will not gain Scriabin at the expense of Mozart, Stravinsky at that of Bach. The world is a large place. It has toys for the babe, instruments for strong hands, a store of memories for the aged. On every side lies untold wealth. Petöfi sings the freedom of the plains, Scott the land of the mountain and the flood. Art, like the world, is a mirror. To the vital and interested personality every hedgerow proclaims its beauty, every man is a history, every city a great stage on which is acted daily an unending drama. But one must insist that the reality of all this beauty and romance and pathos and interminable interest is evident only to those with eyes to gaze upon them. In music we must take the large and open view. We must see the blood-relationship between the past and the present. The sanest modernism is that which has a strong sense of association, which makes us conscious of the links in the chain that the centuries have forged, which recognises the growth of ideas, which subscribes to the fact that all artists have their ancestry. It is this modernism which shows us the figures of the past and present rubbing shoulders on the vast tapestry of history. I say this as one intensely interested in the music of the time, as one aware that the phrase

"modern music" represents much. Eclecticism is an admirable thing, and it is not an enemy of the right kind of catholicity. He pays a big price for his understanding of and delight in modern works who finds the music of the past utterly destitute of interest and charm.

The plea for the exercise of the historical sense is, therefore, a thoroughly justifiable one; the more so because to see the classics as they are is not easy, and to see modern music as it is, decidedly difficult. The measure of a man's dissatisfaction is not the measure of his education unless discrimination be enthroned. It is, surely, an aim of education to give a man a sense of the real richness of art, to develop his power of selection, to help him to derive the greatest possible benefit from all that has been accomplished. One does not need to be told that the good thing and the valuable is not to be found only in one country or in one period. The entire world holds up its gifts with both hands and asks your acceptance in persuasive accents. The question of praise or blame is concerned solely with merits or defects, and these can be dealt with satisfactorily only if we equip ourselves patiently for the task. We may meet our fretful modernist friends to the extent of agreeing that a restatement of our attitude to the classics is imperatively called for. The musical Homer sometimes nods, the musical sun is not without its spots, and the classical master must be neither a superstition nor one of a group of infallible beings. We sometimes feel that mechanism shouts its triumph over inspiration, and long for the composer to get into his stride again; there are moments when the homage paid to traditional etiquette seems to us altogether excessive. But the recognition of this gives no sanction for wholesale condemnation. Our concern is to hold the balance justly.

It is inevitable that estimates of the music of the past should change from time to time. In its own way and according to its own fashion, every generation sets about the business of giving or withholding marks. New discoveries mean not only an enlargement of music's domains, but an alteration in our attitude towards what is familiar to ear and eye. Monteverde and Gluck, to cite extreme cases, are not to us what they were to their contemporaries. To-day few people are likely to discover in Gluck and Spontini all that Berlioz found there. The continual sifting is all to the good. It has a twofold effect. It tends to make us conscious of the defects of a man, and of these we ought to be conscious if we are to see him as he is; it tends to make us conscious of the greatness of a man whose powers have not hitherto been fully acknowledged.

A really important matter to recognise is that a distaste for or impatience with the music of the past advertises a distinct limitation of sympathies, that it is, in fact, a defect, and not a proof of superiority. Much could be written against fulsome adoration of the classics and the vain repetition of the items by which they are most widely known. And who can measure the amount of harm done to the cause of classical music by the injudicious advocate and the objectionable defender? How often, alas, does the man whose mind is closed, barred and bolted against liberal movements and progressive tendencies pose as the staunch champion of Bach and Mozart and Beethoven in a wicked world running its riotous and unseemly course to the wanton and unshamed strains of modernism; how often does he speak as though he and he alone had access to their inner secrets and knew the magic formula which opens the treasure-cave! Nevertheless, as I have hinted, the classics can stand the most searching criticism in that, after all has been said and done, they will yet have something to say to us. Bach, for example, is full of suggestiveness. The vigorous fibre of his music and the vital play incidental to the contrapuntal style make him far more modern than many writers of more recent date; and Mozart, whose sense of economy, balance, and note values has been admired by many composers, still has an interest for those occupied with the technique of writing.

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There are times when we are impressed by the odyssey of the art-work. At its birth it has much antagonism to face and, if it survive the encounter, it passes to the slightly less hostile atmosphere of controversy. This phase is usually succeeded by that of almost general acceptance. Then comes, perhaps, the attitude of disparagement. So what commenced its career in the salon of the rejected may terminate it in the necropolis of art, the museum. Art is long and life is short, and man, an ephemeral animal, sees things in terms of his own duration upon the earth. The hills and sea alone are the silent witnesses of the death of what we call immortality. Are the classics, then, immortal? Will Beethoven be played a hundred years after this date? This latter question we can safely leave to posterity. It is for posterity to set the matter in the right focus according to its light. What we are called upon to decide is whether the classics have any interest for us, whether they touch a responsive note in our humanity, whether they give us visions that leave us less forlorn.

Let the reader pronounce judgment according to his temperament and disposition. But let him not forget that what has meant so much to so many musical people will not be dealt the death-blow by the cheap disparagement of egotistical superiority. Than that of giving the classicists and the modernists their places, few more urgent critical tasks exist. A thing is not great because it was written by one whose name is to be found in impressive volumes; a thing is not small in interest and unworthy of attention because a man named Smith who lives over the way penned it. We must concentrate on the essential and bear in mind that true insight is born of sympathy.

# THE WAGNERIAN CULTURE SYNTHESIS

By WILHELM PETERSON-BERGER<sup>1</sup>

**A** PROMINENT historian and Wagner critic, H. S. Chamberlain, in his great work "The Foundations of the 19th Century," makes a distinction between the words culture and civilization. The former word he applies to spiritual development, the latter to material, a distinction which seems to be more and more generally accepted. At the same time, he includes under the term culture the three spheres of religion, science, and art.

If one accepts this distinction and division, then the evolution of culture must be looked upon, not merely as a parallel movement within each and every one of its three spheres, but rather as a reciprocal action, and above all as coöperative. For it is clearly evident, that not one of these three spheres, isolated from the others, could satisfactorily carry out the idea of culture.

This, then, is the essence of synthetic art. And as, in consequence, all direct cultural development is manifested chiefly in a struggle for completeness and unity, so the climax and rhythm of the movement are marked by more or less comprehensive syntheses.

Without attempting to set forth in detail the general laws by which culture syntheses come into being, we shall now try to find out by what right one may call the artistic result of Richard Wagner's life-work a culture synthesis.

It is peculiar to the idea and nature of art, that the innermost being of an art work must always be presented in such a way as to act upon the sense of comprehension. This action, as we know, does not need to be direct. It depends upon the inclination, education, susceptibility, disposition, freedom of form or subjection to preconceived notions, and other qualities of the person, whether he must look or listen once or many times, before he apprehends the spirit of the work. But when he does apprehend, it is not his intelligence, his knowledge, or his will, but it is his sensibility that is first touched and made to vibrate, and which, at this touch, instinctively comprehends the essence of the work.

Therefore it would be of great value to our investigation, and would give us a suitable starting-point, if we could, in a general

<sup>1</sup>Translated from the author's "Richard Wagner som Kultur-företeelse." (Chapter IV: Den Wagnerska Kultursyntesen.)



way, determine the conditions under which a sufficiently interested and educated, but at the same time sufficiently unprepared and fairly unprejudiced listener, receives his first really conscious and intelligent impression of a Wagner drama.

There are many Wagner admirers to be found to bear witness with regard to their experience in this respect, but before appealing to them, I shall cite a case which falls within my own field of observation.

This case dates back to some twenty years or so ago. It concerns a gifted and intelligent man who, born of the peasant class and brought up in a thinly populated district, found opportunity only when of mature age to follow his natural bent and devote himself to study. Of course, he wanted to be a preacher. His turn of mind, as well as the devout spirit of the educated people with whom he had hitherto come in contact, scarcely recognized any other course of study as honorable. For the theatrical art, of which he knew nothing, he cherished a horror which had been instilled into him, and was possessed with the preconceived notion that its influence was something injurious, if not dangerous, for the spiritual welfare of mankind.

But he was musically inclined, and was attracted to the art of sound. Of worldly music he knew little, but so much the more of liturgical and church music. His knowledge embraced the field of oratorio, and he admired both Bach and Händel, and Mendelssohn as well.

During his course of study, this man came out into the world somewhat, and coming in contact with other music lovers, he often heard Wagner's name mentioned, and his art discussed in such a way as to arouse his curiosity. Obtaining a closer knowledge of this artist's life and work, he found to his great surprise that there was and had been for a long time a controversy as to the legitimacy and truth of his work in both art and theory. It was something strikingly new to him, and difficult to understand, that art could be a subject of controversy. And his surprise was not diminished by the discovery that in some respects this controversy resembled the spiritual conflicts and passionate outbursts connected with the many external difficulties and inner ruptures and crises of the early Christian church. His historical training put him in a position to see the resemblance between the Wagner movement and a missionary or religious excitement.

Indeed, it is scarcely necessary to add that his curiosity was only increased by this discovery, and that at the earliest opportunity he broke his resolution not to attend the theatre. When a

Wagner evening was announced at the opera house, he promptly bought a ticket for the performance which was, as it happened, "Tannhäuser."

Before discussing the effect which this drama had upon him, let us consider for a moment if the case is sufficiently typical to be of value as evidence.

The man was, without doubt, in the matter of esthetic preparation, a truly ideal Wagner listener. He knew none of the "aims" of art, and was pledged to no party. But he possessed an ideal temperament and a certain simple, general culture. He understood serious music, and had by virtue of his calling acquired some experience in interpreting the words, both of song and recitative. To be sure, he was governed by an ethical prejudice against all scenic art; but, as we shall see, this does not lessen the general significance of the case, but, on the contrary, strengthens it. Therefore, we may accept this listener as reasonably typical for our purpose.

Meanwhile, it remains for us to determine whether or not "Tannhäuser" was the most suitable drama for presenting the Wagnerian art to such a completely uninitiated, though otherwise suitable listener. The question is not difficult to answer, if we remember that the erotic life problem, which in varied forms and acts constitutes the foundation of reality and experience in all of Wagner's dramas, here in "Tannhäuser" takes on its most universally intelligible and, for the majority of people, the most easily recognized form; and that this work, for this and other reasons, occupies a strikingly central position among Wagner's productions. We may say therefore with certainty, that the choice of dramas which chance made for our curious Wagner novice was the best that could have been made.

It is hardly probable that the presentation was a model one. Nevertheless, the impression received by the listener was to him entirely unexpected—new, rich, deep, and thrilling. Afterward, he summed up the details and expressed the key-note in a single word: *worship*. All the factors in the work, the life problem, the action, music, characters all fused into something with which he was familiar in the calling he had chosen—a public religious exercise, the observance of a cult.

It can not be denied that this characterization is striking. The ordinary irreverent opera-goer perceives, indeed, the seriousness of the Tannhäuser drama, and its close connection with Christian religious views, yet always, as it were, through the veil of worldly amusement. This unpractised listener, with his prejudice against

all forms of theatrical art, discovered at the first glance the strongest, deepest, and most distinguishing characteristic of the Wagner art, its serious religious note.

Indeed, it must be admitted that this is especially conspicuous in "Tannhäuser," with its many distinctly religious ideas, motifs, and situations, as sin, repentance, prayer, pardon, condemnation, holy pilgrims, Madonna pictures. But this has a specifically Catholic stamp—and the listener was an orthodox Lutheran—and we all know how easily, in an ordinary uninspired opera presentation, one's attention is turned away from the essential and directed toward distracting details, such as new singers, costumes, theatre parties, decorations, or scenic arrangement. All these and similar details are what the superficial, habitual theatre-goer first notices. Therefore, when this man, totally inexperienced as he was in this line, first of all perceived something else, it was due entirely to the fact that his being was attuned to the key-note of the work, so that he instantly vibrated in unison with the ringing force which welled up through his consciousness, in spite of a host of bewildering and half understood details.

Numberless listeners, among them both greater and lesser critics—Wolzogen, Glasenapp, Schuré, Chamberlain, and others—have been affected in a similar way, in particular by "Tannhäuser." One can, in fact, read this more or less clearly in their enunciations and analyses; and yet, most of them have been so bound by their esthetic and musical theories that the question which lay so near at hand, as to whether this religious spirit might not possibly be common to all of Wagner's productions, has never once occurred to them.

Yet such is the case. Let us imagine that a person such as I have just described, introduced to Wagner in the same way, is impelled by his first strong impression to investigate Wagner's other works. This very reasonable assumption will prove to be particularly significant in its results. We shall find support for our view that all of Wagner's art is fundamentally a manifestation of religious sentiment, and at the same time we shall get a picture of the culture synthesis which we suggested in the beginning.

After such an initiation, the next work which a yearning Wagner novice gets to know, presumably is "Lohengrin," which follows "Tannhäuser" chronologically. That this work likewise strengthens and confirms the previously acquired impression of religious sentiment, every one who has any conception of its purport feels. The entire drama is a brilliantly symbolic presentation of the highest doctrines of theoretical Christianity, above

all, the doctrine of faith and its significance in the struggle between the powers of light and darkness.

Following "Lohengrin," it is probable that our novice comes to "The Flying Dutchman" which, together with the two previously mentioned belongs to the group of Wagner's most often presented works, all of them being of a popular religious nature. Here in the "Dutchman" he finds again the well-known theme taken from the Christian and other religions, that of sacrifice and redemption, used as the chief dramatic motif.

But at the same time he learns that this theme, on the one hand incarnated in the ghostly romanticism of the Dutchman tradition, and on the other appearing in a *milieu* of idyllic-realistic commonplaceness, is made up of such scattered and destructive elements that the religious note does not always sound forth clearly, although there is plainly an effort in that direction throughout the work. If our Wagner friend remembers that the "Dutchman" is the first real achievement of the music dramatist in this field, he will find the effort still more interesting, and will see in it a confirmation of his first Tannhäuser impression.

We can now imagine that his interest and enthusiasm have increased until, along with his cultivation of the Wagnerian dramas, he begins the study of their mythical, literary, and folklore sources, the Celto-Germanic and early Scandinavian sagas, as well as Wagner's own theories of art and critical writings, his life and spiritual development. Therewith two significant discoveries await him. First, he will learn that Wagner himself, in his brochure on "Religion and Art," states that these two manifestations of the human soul-life are intimately related and mutually dependent one upon the other. Second, he will find that among the dramas of which Wagner completed the literary part alone and never composed the music, one treats of Volund the Smith, a confessedly erotico-artistic life problem, while in another, "Jesus of Nazareth," Wagner does not hesitate to present dramatically the most religious of all figures in the history of humanity. In general, he will learn that the great founders of religion, among them Buddha, kept Wagner's imagination busy in a characteristic way.

Thus prepared, he goes to see the five dramas next in order after "Lohengrin": the four parts of "The Ring of the Nibelung," and "Tristan and Isolde."

His expectation of perceiving here a religious undertone of the same sort as that in the preceding works, is disappointed when he learns that all these works taken together form a single group

among Wagner's productions, a group which may be designated as the "philosophical." However, that insight into the nature of philosophy which we may assume with him, makes it possible for him to discover, differentiated somewhat from this philosophy, an atmosphere of deep and passionately pulsating religious sentiment. Further, he finds that the purely philosophical element, not only where it steps naked into the light, but even more perhaps where the artist succeeds in blending and fusing it with the whole, impresses upon the work a peculiar stamp of universality, of something which goes beyond the usual boundaries of art. And it is this universality which, without direct religious action, nevertheless elevates and sustains the work within the realm of the religious mood, and calls forth corresponding admiration.

Certain it is, that in a closer study of the separate Nibelung dramas, he will encounter unexplainable contradictions in the action, and dull passages in both words and music. But besides this, nevertheless, in such fundamental scenes as that of the death augury in "The Valkyr," the awakening of Brünnhilde in "Siegfried," and the death march in "The Twilight of the Gods," he will find that underneath it all the stream of religious feeling runs unbroken, watering with its flood the roots of this Yggdrasil of music dramatics, "The Ring of the Nibelung." This powerful composition, he perceives, is built up on religious myths and symbols, treating not only of the beginning of the world, but of the end, and of its redemption from suffering through love.

By this time, therefore, a fairly complete familiarity with this great work, and the study of its fundamental spiritual note, are calculated to awaken within the mind of our investigator a conception of the entire subject of synthesis in art, and at the same time to develop more acutely his comprehension of the religious element in Wagner's art. He comes now to understand that the religion which is professed and enunciated in and through this art, is endlessly far above the stiff, scholastic formulas of the usual dogmas, and is in itself the quintessence of the so-called creed of common life, by virtue of its high spirituality a confessionless, and—further—a nameless religion.

The study of "Tristan" will not disturb this view. The philosophy of this work is that of Schopenhauer, and its acknowledged pessimism is related both to Buddhism and Christianity. Likewise, the part which the "world" plays in its complex of ideas, reminds one strongly of the position which it occupies in the scheme of Christianity. But more than all these external forms, must the unparalleled passionate strength of feeling expressed in

the Tristan drama lead the thought into the sphere of religion where alone, up to this time, was such ecstasy known—ecstasy which in itself is of a religious nature; and which, in its fiery glow, melts and transforms into luminous emblems and metaphysical symbols all within its circle. And all this in “Tristan” is even more incapable of being formulated, still more inexpressible and spiritual, than in the Nibelung dramas.

If our Wagner friend is the least bit sharp-sighted psychologically—and in this respect he ought to have developed by this time—then this study of “Tristan” will surely remind him of a point so often demonstrated by psychological investigation, the relation between *eroticism* and *religion*. And it is this relation which Wagner brings out so clearly in his art. Yes, one may venture the assertion that Wagner’s dramas are as strongly pervaded with a religious fervor or ecstasy, as the life problems are manifestly erotic. This is one of the conclusions to which a study of Wagner leads.

Our coming expert has now progressed so far on his way of initiation that there remain only two dramas, the latest and perhaps the most wonderful of all: “The Meistersingers of Nuremberg,” and “Parsifal.” We may imagine that in order to familiarize himself with these, he sets out for the festival at Bayreuth, where “The Meistersingers” likewise ought preferably to be seen and heard in its national setting. Not one of Wagner’s works is better suited to that stage than this happy, sunshiny comedy with its mild, conciliatory philosophy of life, its humor and its triumphant music, giving as a whole a lightly sketched but fairly historical picture of German temperament, German feeling and culture. No work can ever illustrate more clearly or more brilliantly than this, the national thought and cultural significance of Bayreuth, in its character of the logical and real conclusion of the Wagnerian art production.

It is not difficult to find the religious element in this work. It is wholly and completely embodied in the figure of Hans Sachs on the one hand in a more general way, in his piety, his understanding and fine resignation in the presence of youth, yes, even in his humor. On the other hand, it is to be seen in his specifically Wagnerian conception of art, which naturally is Wagner’s own. This pervades and controls a principal and integral part of the action of the drama, but is summarized in a highly characteristic manner in Sachs’ concluding speech by the words “the sacred German art.” His entire view is expressed in that one word “sacred.”

With Wagner art was a religion, the most generally accepted expression for his religious feeling—therefore, it was “sacred.” It never occurred to him in any of his many theoretical works to discuss the *raison d’être* of art. So free as he was from every trace of skepticism or agnosticism, it was impossible for him even to question this view of art, and he had but little idea of its biological significance. Art had for him an absolute value. The word to him meant origin: in the beginning there was art. Viewed from this standpoint, the personally religious element in the philosophical dramas of “The Nibelung’s Ring” and “Tristan” stands out still more conspicuously.

But the art that Wagner meant was not a superficial, plebeian embellishment and decoration of the commonplaceness of everyday life; it was brought about by the coöperation of all the separate arts. It was a lifting up of the soul to the spiritualized heights of religion, to the pure realm of deep, though radiantly happy seriousness, to a plane the most immaterial possible in this material world, a plane which presented a picture or interpretation of life so drenched with the tears of pain and joy, so steeped in the silent and eternal sunshine of truth, that in its presence all other pictures or interpretations dissolved and melted away into nothingness.

All this he attained—after years of struggle and effort, and even mistakes—in clearest and most consummate form in “Parsifal,” that beautiful work of his old age. With this “*Bühnenweihfestspiel*” (that is, festival play, intended to consecrate, to sanctify the theatre) he sets the final official seal of religious feeling on his entire life-work, and gives us the key to the inmost secret of his being: *he was an artistic reformer and promulgator of religion.*<sup>1</sup>

But with the experience of “Parsifal,” and with the discovery of its relation to the personality of its originator, our Wagner investigator has concluded his initiation, and he now emerges a full-fledged expert. The magic circle of the great dramas closes about him in a symbolization of the highest religious sentiment. Here in “Parsifal” he receives once more his first impression, though endlessly widened, deepened, and clarified. Here he finds again not only the Tannhäuser struggle between elemental eroticism and religio-esthetic romanticism, but also the radiant faith symbolism of “Lohengrin,” the redemption theme of “The Flying Dutchman” and “The Ring,” the noble gentleness of “The Mastersingers,” together with the light and joy of its midsummer mood

<sup>1</sup>That Wagner, in his treatise on “Religion and Art,” denies every intention of founding a new religion, is naturally no evidence against the correctness of this statement, since it is a question of what he did, and not of what he thought he was doing.

here subdued to the Good Friday spirit, and finally, even the intense fervor and passion of the "Tristan" music, now purified of all wordly desire or earthly dross. "Parsifal" is the essence and sum total of the entire Wagner dramatic art, the synthesis of synthesis.

If now we try to get a survey of the store of knowledge which our Wagner expert, during his analytical investigation, has accumulated in his memory and in his library, we shall find that it comprises all the essential results gleamed from Germany's spiritual evolution up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and that it gives a very complete picture of the cultural and religious history of the German people, its literary, dramatic, and musical development, its philosophical productivity, its legendary treasure, its race kinships and origin.

On this basis, it becomes clear that Wagner's artistic life work may be truthfully designated as a culture synthesis. And this becomes still more evident if we now follow up the association of ideals which all our previous reasoning logically requires, and thus disclose the connection between the religious key-note of the Wagner art, and its manifest character of a musical culture syntheses.

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When Chamberlain, the author mentioned in our introduction, undertook his division of culture into three spheres, it is not impossible that he may have had in mind one of Goethe's most remarkable aphorisms: He who has art and science, has likewise religion; he who has neither of the first two, may have religion.

So runs the great poet's enunciation, remarkable for the reason that it expresses so clearly the well-known, intensely universal and synthetic nature of his genius. He obviously formulated his thought with intent, to the effect that religion may take on two entirely different aspects or forms of evolution, and must not be looked upon merely as a point of departure or hypothesis, but also as the final conclusion and quintessence of development of science and art. It is clear that to him, as well as to many other spiritually great minds such as Beethoven or Wagner, that the word religion did not mean any definite dogma or fixed creed. Such things, indeed, merely signified an incidental, though perhaps at times long extended mediary period in the evolution of religion from simple materialism to the highest form of conscious idealism. No, Goethe's religion, like that of many others before



and since, undoubtedly may be described as the positive attitude taken by the willing, feeling, and knowing—perhaps still more, the unknowing—human being, toward the mysteries of reality and infinity, those mysteries which can never be explained logically, that is, as to cause.

And this attitude, which is revealed in the lower stages of development in unconscious myths, and in conscious symbols in the higher stages, is but the expression in its most generally accepted form, of the passionate seriousness of life, and the struggle of the inner being to attain, by way of the highest truths and deepest facts, that completeness which alone constitutes the true value of all genuine religious feeling.

But culture as a biological phenomenon is, as we recall, the highest manifestation and application of a surplus of life energy accumulated in a being capable of development, during centuries of struggle with environment, and liberated only when, in some way, a diminution is brought about in the pressure of the external hardships of life. This surplus—which also may be called a sort of superqualification of pure animal existence, and which therefore distinguishes the primitive people capable of development from those incapable—is the force which has impelled the religion of the past to lift itself from the simple, materialistic stage of nature common to all, up to the plane of highest spirituality and idealism. Such an evolution of necessity emerges sooner or later as a culture synthesis.

But if we try to imagine the different phases of this development, we must first and foremost admit that Goethe was right when he conceived religion as the hypothesis and first source of science and art. Out of the myths, the emotionalism, the doctrines and theories of the original materialistic religion, gradually evolves a desire for truth, for investigation and knowledge. In the same way comes the evolution of art from the practical side of religion, from the forms of primitive worship, in especial from the ceremonial use of rhythm as a means of exciting emotion, as well as from externals such as amulets, symbols, images, or temples.

Science soon splits into many branches and groups, consciously frees itself from religion, and often attacks and opposes her forms of revelation. Likewise, art divides into a number of individual forms, all more or less separate from religion, and endeavoring still further to develop independently of one another.

Meanwhile, unnoticed and without ceasing, the surplus life energy is driving the sap of religion up through both of these shoots from her stem, thus nourishing the process of development.

And during the course of this upward movement, religion herself is developed, purified and transformed, like a gas that is filtered and rarefied. When the individual sciences approach the zenith of their special line of development, *she* is the secret force which enables them once more to come together in a synthesis.

The sciences unite to form a comprehensive, universal science, philosophy; and the separate arts in the same way bring forth universal art, expressed in the music drama. But when this happens, religion herself also reaches her highest point of refinement and becomes, so to speak, a universal religion, the quintessence of all typically human religious experience and feeling. But as such, she is too immaterial, too incomprehensible, too unassertive, to possess body or form of her own, so she borrows one from art, and takes, very naturally, the form of the most ethereal and most ideal of all, the art of music.

Music has on its part, during the period of isolation, developed to the highest point of spiritual worth and power. Thus, through Bach and Beethoven it has been expanded and refined until it forms the strongest expression of the tragic-humorous conception of life, and as such becomes the body for the spirit of purified religion. Religion becomes music, and music, religion. And in this form of manifestation, she unites with the two lesser syntheses of universal science and universal art. They are absorbed in her, and the last combination takes place and produces the culture synthesis, the symbol of music-religion, the true music drama.

As we have seen, Wagner's art corresponds fairly well to this theory and characterization of the origin of the music drama. But naturally, Wagner's culture synthesis is not the only one possible or conceivable in our day, from the fact that it has, along with the typical, too many individual or incidental features. Such individual features, as we have previously pointed out, are the rôle which eroticism plays in all of the Wagner productions, and the opposition of this eroticism to religion. This opposition has its analogy and secondary manifestation in the contradictory relations between love of the world and love of art, which may be seen in Wagner's attitude toward music as an individual art.

On the other hand, the more or less fundamental religious atmosphere is a necessarily typical feature. For whatever the musical culture synthesis which Europe and humanity may yet bring forth, certain it is, they must have the same *roots* as Wagner's art. The fibers of life must run back to that first wonderful culture synthesis, the Greek music drama, which, originating in

a form of worship, the Dionysos cult, continued to be a religious service up to the time of its highest development.

This music drama, whose greatest creators, Aeschylus and Sophocles, were deeply imbued with the esoteric and mystic religious spirit of their time, this drama, whose mission was religious purification through instinctive sympathy and awe, began to decline the very moment that religion passed away. It was then that the art of the music drama lost its soul and became an ordinary "public entertainment."

We now know that this decline resulted in complete withering of branch and stem. Life withdrew to the roots, and all efforts at revival continued artificial and fruitless until, after the lapse of centuries, the spirit of tragedy again entered into the drama, when a genius was born, humanly strong enough and richly endowed to embody in his art the most synthetic of all elements, religion.

For the religion which Wagner so passionately proclaimed—which only as music drama *can* be proclaimed—is tragedy itself, the essence of the culture synthesis, which we have seen evolve from a tragic-humorous conception of life, through centuries of struggle and changes of time, among the highly gifted races of northern Europe.

(Translated by Hester Coddington)

## “NICHT MEHR TRISTAN”

By B. M. STEIGMAN

**P**HONOGRAPHED music is an eminently suitable objective for the smiter of Philistines and the slayer of them with great slaughter. For one thing, its devotees are so many that the warrior has cause enough to appeal for Jehovah's thunder against them. Then it proceeds from a mechanical contraption, hateful, accordingly, in the ears of the true believer. More than that, it has become commercialized, and with amazing success. It is therefore unmistakably a contrivance of the Children of Darkness. It is an institution, an automaton, banal, crude, lifeless, soulless!

It is or it isn't art. Its present significance only the deaf could deny. That the mechanical contraption eliminates time and space as obstacles to the hearing of good singing and playing may have far-reaching effects. It is because music more than any other of the dynamic arts is actually only of that point of time we mean by the present, that so much popular misunderstanding as to its "meaning" exists. The interpretative faculty is given scant footing. The phonograph, however imperfectly, does fix performed music for further observation. This leads to understanding, which presently becomes critical. The opera record gives a relentless exposition of what might otherwise have escaped unnoticed.

Now it is not at all unlikely that one of the first results will be the insistence upon operatic sense as well as sound. The words may have to pass muster. Of all the wonders about the opera the strangest is the complacent acceptance of the unbelievable drivel that is the general text. The sharpest theatre-goer, who, if the same crude and absurdly colored bait were laid for him in a play, would utterly condemn it, swallows the whole affair at the opera-house and even believes he has partaken of a rare feast. What matters the story or the language? Who insists upon such extraneous matter cannot possibly care for opera. The passionate lover of music should be blind and deaf to the impenetrable stupidity, the wizened and painted gaudiness, the idiotic prancing and sputtering and fuming, of his beloved. The closer view and

hearing of what it really is may bring him to his senses. The phonograph may help to dispel the enchantment which the distant stage has lent.

The foreign language is something of a refuge. For nonsense appears blatantly exposed only when it stands in the vernacular. The alien tongue is more merciful, for to most of us it is not altogether transparent. The fonder the lover of grand opera, the more reluctant, it would seem, should he be to have it translated. In English, to be sure, it is all arrant rot; but, look you, such may be the thoughts and feelings far away where there are Cannibals that each other eat, the Anthropophagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. They perhaps do express themselves in just such bombast and are naturally given to the maudlin and tawdry.

Such considerations may have had little to do with it;—it may have been only the natural inertia of the opera companies that until the outbreak of the war preserved most opera and music drama in the original. The force that overcame all doubt and inertia was the force that in 1918 preserved civilization on the fields of France. Yet it was not at all spent in the performance. It carried on where there could not possibly be any need for it. It struck with particular violence—of all things—the music drama; the activity than which there is none at a further remove from the daily activities. We might as well have sent an expeditionary force into Arimaspsia or Xanadu. It must be admitted that it was the simplest way of showing resentment against the German language. It required merely a negative insistence, preferable certainly to a positive abolition of the German press or to a carting forth and burning of a hundred thousand German books. Beside this, the banishment of Wagner was much easier to effect, much easier, peradventure, to endure.

And then after a decent interval of time he may be restored. But he must first turn English. Considering it all, it may be an unconscious tribute to the poet. We have with charity aforethought forborne from insisting upon translations of French and Italian opera. We recognize in Wagner's dramas truly noble poetry such as may well grace our tongue. We find them staged sensibly in Monsalvat, in Nibelheim, at the bottom of the Rhine-maidens' Rhine, at the top of the Valkyries' mountains, where poetic rapture is more likely than, say, in Violetta's drawing-room in Paris or in the real home for boys in the Golden West. We find them, moreover, set to music that is of acknowledged greatness. The combination, we feel, may bear the closest scrutiny. Fix it

for the ear by phonographing it and it will remain music and poetry. Well, that ought certainly to stand translation.

But the tribute which the general demand for Wagner in English implies turns into grotesque insult when this is carried into effect. The sound and sense and spirit of the new words will no longer fit. They bulge here and strain there and are warped and awry nearly all over. The general form, fixed by the music, remains the same. The poetry it is meant to grace is a dead and senseless weight.

If it were only possible to submit proof—phonographic proof that could be considered leisurely—of how it would turn out, there might be less enthusiastic subscribing to the ugly perpetration. Only a partial representation, the graphic, the black and white, is possible. It is at least indicative. As it is the more so, the greater the beauty of the original, the proof here submitted is of “Tristan und Isolde.”

That of all incredible nonsense that is called translation of this music drama the Corders’ is the generally used English libretto, is evidence of how operatic is the accepted regard for the text. The libretto is usually anonymous, a saving indication of sense by the authors. Here is a sample from the opening scene:

**BRANGÄNE:**

Dem Wunder aller Reiche,  
dem hochgepries’nen Mann,  
dem Helden ohne Gleiche,  
des Ruhmes Hort und Bann?

**ISOLDE:**

Der zagend vor dem Streiche  
sich flüchtet wo er kann,  
weil eine Braut er als Leiche  
für seinen Herrn gewann!—  
Dünkt es dich dunkel,  
mein Gedicht?

**BRANGÄNE:**

Extolled by ev’ry nation,  
his happy country’s pride,  
the hero of creation,—  
whose fame so high and wide?

**ISOLDE:**

In shrinking trepidation  
his shame he seeks to hide,  
while to the king, his relation,  
he brings the corpse-like bride!—  
Seems it so senseless  
what I say?

Well, let the reader judge.

Tolerable poetry is perhaps the hardest to stomach. We spew the lukewarm concoction out of our mouths. The Corders are noteworthy at least in that their banality holds the reader’s attention. There is nothing mediocre about it. At times it is so pronounced as to be quite impressive. The interpretation of the meeting of the lovers is an example. Possibly the pace of the English text is set by the customary antics on the stage of Tristan and Isolde immediately after drinking the love potion. The two score bars or so that it takes to get the lovers started is used by the singers according to tradition for muscular activity familiar on

the baseball field as incidental to the pitchers' warming up. When at last they do go to it their speed and control are relentless:

Ohne Gleiche!  
Überreiche!  
Überselig!  
Ewig! Ewig!

Endless pleasure!  
Boundless treasure!  
Ne'er to sever!  
Never! Never!

As the poetic rapture of the second act rises, the Corder translation begins to froth and rave. The reader will hardly believe that the following, for example, is the accepted version of part of the duet, reprinted from the standard libretto:

Barg im Busen  
uns sich die Sonne,  
leuchten lachend  
Sterne der Wonne.  
Von deinem Zauber  
sanft umspinnen,  
vor deinen Augen  
süß zerronnen,  
Herz an Herz dir,  
Mund an Mund,  
Eines Athems  
ein'ger Bund;—

Hid our hearts away  
sunlight's streaming,  
bliss would bloom  
from stars' tender beaming.  
To thy enchantment  
we surrender  
beneath thy gaze  
so wondrous tender;  
heart to heart  
and lip to lip,  
each the other's  
breath we sip. Etc.

Further quotation might be spared. But it is not only from the fury of the existing translations that the good Lord is to deliver us, but from threatened further barbarous invasions. Which to prevent, the terrifying record of those who in the past have sought to effect anything like a landing, is herewith dutifully exposed.

To the natural difficulties which the unfortunate translator encountered in the German sentence structure, transposed as it is beyond the limits of our widest poetic license, must be added such cramping requirements as rhyme, which produced distortions such as "When in the sick man's keen blade she perceived a notch had been made"; and alliteration, responsible for monstrosities like "Blood-guilt gets between us," "Blissful beams our eyes are binding." Then there are many abstract terms, especially those that have distinct Wagnerian connotation, that cannot possibly be translated. "Wahn" is not "folly" (the Corders turned "Welcher Wahn" into "What a whim!"), nor is "Lust" the same as "bliss." "In (Isolden) selig nicht ganz verging" is supposed to mean "not sink at once into bondage blest."

The greatest obstacle is, of course, the fixed melody, not of the larger, simpler and more obvious "dance-form," as Wagner names it, into which a stanza or whole verse paragraph may be

made to fit, regardless of the position of individual words or even lines, but melody that is an intense and beautiful reading of the poem. Precise textual equivalence is hardly ever possible. And even slight transpositions result in utterly meaningless singing. Thus, “er sah mir in die Augen,” the last word of which is linked with the corresponding motif, becomes “his eyes on mine were fastened,” to which the music is quite unrelated. “Das Schwert—ich liess es fallen” is turned into “The sword—dropped from my fingers,” in which the fine repression and suspense of the pauses after “ich” and after “liess” are lost by the anteposition of “dropped,” and the following words made merely redundant. “Mit dem Blick mich nicht mehr beschwere!” where the significance of text and music depends on the word “Blick,” is in Corder English “my emotion then might be ended,” with its equivalent of the inane syllable “mo.” Isolde’s unspeakable contempt “für Kornwalls müden König” is absurdly made a geographic aversion: “for Mark, the *Cornish* monarch.”

The page from which these examples are taken is representative of the whole work. There is hardly a passage but has its shortcomings. And every now and then these wax into truly monumental lapses, like Isolde’s puzzling

Wie das Herz ihm  
muthig schwillt,  
voll und hehr  
im Busen quillt:

How his heart  
with lion zest  
calmly happy  
beats in his breast.

and Marke’s shocking

“Why in hell must I bide” . . .

Why, indeed!—

In the preface to his translation Jackson attempts to indicate the climactic effectiveness of the drama by quotations such as: “The waves of melody rise higher and higher, as if the distant portals of heaven opened to the vibrations of two hearts.”—The most curious of literary illusions certainly must be his who imitates a high winged flight by flapping his blunt feathers and believes the windy disturbance he makes indicative of altitude and speed. The prefatory dizziness is felt throughout the work.

O blinde Augen!  
Blöde Herzen!  
Zahmer Muth,  
verzagtes Schweigen!

O branded blindness!  
Heart’s ensnaring,  
Daunted daring’s  
Silence despairing!



Jackson's diction is noteworthy. Tristan considers the potion "heart enmaddening," Isolde calls him her "faithless enfolder," and while Brangäne is "blooming and wailing to heaven," the two lovers are in chewing-gum rapture over their "luscious delights." The translator throughout shows vast range, now gushing forth that

des Quelles sanft  
rieselnde Welle  
rauscht so wonnig daher;

The purling fount's  
Rippling current  
Murmurs so merrily on,

now in a business-like manner begging to state that

Dein Loos nun selber  
magst du dir sagen:

Thy fate had truly  
Been settled duly.

The Earl of Roscommon's rule for translators is never forgotten: "Tho' gross innumerable Faults abound, in spite of nonsense, never fail of sound."

Of regard for the music there is probably less here than in any other translation meant to be sung. Even outstanding conformity is ignored. Brangäne's "was dich quält," with its implication both by voice and orchestra of the key motif of the play, is made meaningless by "to me confess." "Der Wunde, die ihn plagte," with its continuous suffering in chromatic descents, is in fine musical and dramatic contrast to the following line, "getreulich pflag sie da"; and the effect is destroyed by singing both ideas in the first line: "She healed the wounds that pained him," and then adding, as Jackson seems to have a mania for doing, trite and irrelevant details: "And watched him night and day." Similar ruinous treatment is accorded the admirable setting of "das Schwert—ich liess es fallen!": "It fell—for thee alone meant." The absurdity to which this indifference to the music led him is well exemplified by his disregard of the four bars that separate Brangäne's reply to Isolde's request for the casket—a passage necessary dramatically for Brangäne to cross the stage to fetch the casket, and musically to develop the phrase associated with it—from her exposition of its contents. Jackson's sentence is left dangling, broken in two by the passage.

With a parting mention of the Beckmesser versification ("Be'fore the sun shall set"; "whatever Y'solde com'mand," etc.) and the distortions that they produce, such as "No insult such would twice to give they desire to" and "In custom search" ("Fragt die Sitte")—this chamber of "Tristan" horrors has received sufficient notice. We pass to Exhibit C, the Chapman version.

The inevitable crippled and club-footed lines are here, too, in abundance. Especially cruel is the constant dismemberment of the text, sentences and phrases being ruthlessly lopped off where the music and the drama call for a pause. Specimen: "dem Eigenholde" (rest): "forthwith be told, he"; "nun höre" (rest): "now hear what"; "Und warb er Marke" (rest): "and if to Mark he." The exigencies of rhyme make it necessary for Isolde to "mend" Tristan; of alliteration, to "waken the deep and the growl of its greed"; of stanzaic conformity, "from this wonder, sun to sunder."

The text has in general the usual defects. There is such senseless translation as that of "Welcher Wahn" into "This is false," "Hart am Ziel" into "Right at land," "Liebeswonne" into "Love and passion." "Diess wundervolle Weib" becomes "This wondrous fair, a wife"; "Sehnsucht Noth" is "wistful pain"; "Isolde lebt und wacht" means "Isolde lives aright." The significance of "Urvergessen" is "out of thinking." The music becomes often meaningless, as when Isolde's scornful reference to the king, "Stehen wir vor König Marke," is turned into "We shall ere long be standing"; or, when orchestra and voice suggest "Laubes säuselnd Getön," the words are: "(by) branches art thou misled." Nor are there lacking such special features as Tristan's suspicious account of how he obtained that powerful drink. Somebody "slipped it" to him, he says, and he goes on to relate how "filled with rapture" he "sipped it." Isolde, as befits a lady, takes it of course only for her health. "This draught will do me good," she says.

The Jameson translation clutches fearfully to the original. It aims at perfect word and even phrase equivalence and does succeed better than any other. But it follows that much of it is utterly unidiomatic, and some of it even absurd. The disregard for rhyme and alliteration is conducive to exactness; but the removal of such restraints makes the poetic rapture of the drama fly outward into apparently irrelevant directions. Unrhymed lyric expression that can give the engraved effect of the rhymed (as Tennyson's "Tears, idle tears" does) is rare. The ordinary attempts sprawl. Jameson at best writes prose. At worst his accurate following of the German leads to such constructions as "No day nor morrow" ("Nicht heut' noch morgen") or "True be to me?" ("Bist du mir treu?"); or to such felicities as "this peerless first of heroes" and "he looked beneath my eyelids."

Forman's translation is certainly not prose. If eight pages of appendix press notices (quoting among others Swinburne and Watts-Dunton) can establish anything, it ought to be magnificent

poetry. It is presumably the best that has been done by way of "Tristan" translation, and is therefore the most illuminating. It permits of judgment of a product finished in conformance with the Wagnerian requirements. It follows carefully, as the title-page promises, the mixed alliterative and rhyming metres of the original. It is not intended, however, says the author, "to be taken in strict and continuous company with the music," and he has "not considered it necessary to print the numerous alternative readings which would be requisite for such a purpose." Whereby is implied that the alternative lines are more singable than readable. It would be rather interesting, considering the "readable" text, to see those alternative lines which have been kept prudently out of print. They baffle speculation of possibilities in grotesque.

For the printed version is as fantastically puffed up a piece of writing as the affliction of "style" has ever produced. It is really astonishing that anyone of our own age should care to accept the tinsel legacies that were Euphues'. But here they are, jacked up on impossible stilts, those mechanical contrivances of elaborate indirectness and far-fetched phraseology, that dreary parade of senseless sound. And it has not even the occasional glib cleverness and fancy that some of the anatomists of wit attained. It is altogether ridiculous. "Let laughter," says Isolde when she extinguishes the torch, "let laughter as I slake it, be the sound!" And surely no audience will disappoint her when the next thing heard is

ISOLDE: Treuloser Holder!  
TRISTAN: Seligste Frau!

ISOLDE: Faithlessly fondest!  
TRISTAN: Deathlessly dearest!

BEIDE: Wie sich die Herzen  
wogend erheben,  
wie alle Sinne  
wonnig erbeben!  
Sehnender Minne  
schwellendes Blühen,  
schmachtender Liebe  
seliges Glühen!  
Jach in der Brust  
jauchzende Lust!

BOTH: Seas in our hearts  
to billows are shaken!  
My mind in a tempest  
of madness is taken!  
Lifts me the surge  
of a sense beyond name!  
Fills me a goading,  
gladdening flame!  
My bosom the bliss  
can bear not of this!

Provided the audience hears it. Typographically it is certainly no more preposterous than phonographically. Whether they be read or sung, such phenomena must be encountered as "hope of hap," "unshuddering ship," "for baneful draught its backward bane." Tristan is here a "bride-beseecher," "in truth the most unturning." The alliterative orgy makes the lines stagger ("From

him back you will hear," "me thou wouldst linger not nigh to") and hiccup ("He prated at lip," "The sword—I downward sank it"), and go off into besotted gibberish ("A scorn that scarred her land," "who Isold' could see and in Isold' not madden to melt his soul"). Which suggests the literal subject-matter of Tristan's reference—irreverent and unconstitutional though it be—to that accursed drink "whose foam with bliss I sipped and swallowed."

If a final demonstration were needed of what Wagner is like in English it is furnished by Le Gallienne. His "Tristan" is unrestrained by any consideration for the music or the original metre, rhyme, and alliteration. The freedom thereby gained should be promising. Yet the product is very tame indeed. It is sometimes incorrect as translation, often slipshod, rather wearisome throughout. Illustrative passages might be taken almost at random; but Wagner translations probably the reader's bosom "more can bear not of this."

An interesting sidelight upon the subject is cast by Oliver Huckel's effort to translate into narrative blank verse both the words and the action of the music drama. For though his muse, certainly unlike Le Gallienne's, is one of raven hair and ruby lips, his version is the more readable. But only when Wagner is lost sight of altogether, as in "Tristram of Lyonesse," is English poetry evidently possible.

Mention should be made of Mr. Krehbiel's new translation of the "Liebestod," which has been sung at several orchestral concerts. It is a faithful enough version, but there is nothing about it to modify the conclusions already drawn. It is better than the Corders' cabaret finale of "sinking, be drinking, in a kiss, highest bliss." And yet, more than such damning praise can hardly be given "immerse me, disperse me, wittingless find sweet bliss." "Immerse" and "disperse" have none of the connection and sequence that "ertrinken" and "versinken" have, except the rhyme. And "wittingless" is a brainless bauble-intrusion of the kin of Wamba, serf of Cedric the Saxon.

Reference has already been made to the suggestion that the dramas be translated into French. The difficulties, however, would be similar. Besides which, the spirit of French, its genius, or whatever it is that gives any language atmosphere, is more alien even than that of English. The theme of "Tristan und Isolde," as conceived by Wagner, is especially beyond French expression. The translation becomes sharp, polished, pretty, at times even flippant. Such impression has not merely a surface origin in yellow paper covered books. It goes deeper. In considering a language,

the style is the people. The emotions of Wagner's "Tristan" are not of the French. Taine is enlightening:

The bent of the French character makes of love not a passion but a gay banquet, tastefully arranged, in which the service is elegant, the food exquisite, the silver brilliant, the two guests in full dress, in good humor, quick to anticipate and please each other, knowing how to keep up the gayety, and when to part.

Of the five French versions, that of *Le Comte de Chambrun* is admittedly unsingable, and that of Wilder has been discarded as impossibly crude and inaccurate. D'Offoël insists that his is for singing only. His excuse accuses: when the words are sung, he says, their imperfections, only too apparent when read, will disappear or at least seem slighter. The implied license enables him to conform fairly well with the music. Lyon's is a linear prose translation, too literal to be idiomatic, poetic, or musically sensible. That of Ernst is the least unsatisfactory. But although his work is sufficiently careful, it is quite impossible to consider it as anything more than a correct French gloss. How disillusioning seems Isolde's *Liebestod*, how matter of fact, when she can give so precise an account of it as: "Dans la Vie souffle immense du Tout, me perdre, m'éteindre, sans pensée, toute Joie!" That's all. (Lyon's is: "Me nouer, Disparaître, Inconsciente, Suprême volupté!" D'Offoël's: "se perdre, se fondre, sans pensée, ô bonheur!") The dramatic concepts lose their connotation. "Wahn" becomes either "L'erreur" or "Aveugle"; "göttlich ew'ges Ur-Vergessen" in Lyon's translation is "Du divin, éternel, primitif oubli"; in D'Offoël's: "l'oubli divin, total, suprême." Ernst's is "que l'oubli divin sans bornes"; and of "Ich war, wo ich von je gewesen": "J'étais aux sources de mon être." Good enough perhaps as science, but hardly as poetry.

More detailed consideration can profit little. Whether in English or in French a translation can give merely the lifeless substance of what in the original is the greatest of music dramas. The characters are mechanical contrivances singing mechanically contrived words. They are not the characters Wagner conceived: "nicht mehr Isolde, nicht mehr Tristan." None of the translations is really deserving of any serious criticism. And their exposition here is in part to indicate to such as may want to venture again upon so arid and waste an undertaking the unhappy fate of those who perished before them. The main concern is of course the suffering that may be inflicted upon the audience. It is sincerely to be hoped that any proposed text will be submitted on the

typograph at least for general inspection before it is made into the great and inflexible, almost permanently fixed, record that is an opera company's performance. What the verdict would be it is fairly safe to foretell. And if the musical setting could be added and we could try out the “record” at close range, there could be no doubt about it.

# TONIC-SOL-FA; PRO AND CON

By J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND

**I**N two articles in the April, 1918, number of *The Musical Quarterly*, the Tonic-Sol-Fa system comes in for hearty praise, which in truth it well deserves. As I gather that the system is not in such universal use in the United States as it has been in England, I may perhaps be allowed to refer to some aspects of its working in the country of its origin. The time has gone by when one was obliged to take sides about it, and either to enlist as a whole-hearted partisan of T.S.F. eschewing all music that could not easily be written in it, or else to be classed among the "high-brow" musicians who knew nothing about it and cared less, condemning it as superficial and associated with the 'lower orders' and non-conformity in general. In the present day, one may recognize, without going thereby in peril of one's life, that it has defects as well as merits, and that it is eminently useful in certain ways, though in others it has the effect of keeping back musical progress.

It is obvious that its great asset, the constant reference to the tonic of the key, is nothing new; this was recognized under the Hexachordal system, just as clearly as the principle of the movable *Do*, though that was called by the original name of *Ut*. The truth of Just Intonation is contained in the T.S.F. modulator, though it is a curious fact that this is not intentionally or expressly taught. The fact that G sharp and A flat are not the same note, though the same key has to serve for both on the piano, is conveyed, or might be conveyed to the pupils of T.S.F., but by a very singular accident, the modulator which hangs on the wall of every elementary school in England, and the book which the teacher holds in his hand, were formerly at variance as to which note is the higher. This discrepancy remained unnoticed so long, that it is fair to conclude that the valuable information contained in the system was not turned to much account in practical teaching.

Consciously or unconsciously, the pupils of T.S.F. do sing better in tune than other children, and this of itself is no light matter. The ease with which a single part of a vocal composition can be read is of course a very great advantage. As long as the

attention need only be kept to the singer's own part, and as long as there is a competent conductor to superintend matters, there is no comparison as to which is the more successful notation, and the ear-training which goes on while the T.S.F. system is being practised, is not to be despised. Again, there is the fact that some kind of musical nourishment is given to a large class of the community who, if confined to the staff notation, would never take the trouble to learn music at all. Perhaps the most useful work of T.S.F. is as the best possible introduction to the staff notation. Just as the musicians of old time used the Gamut (i.e. the plan of the Guidonian hexachords), side by side with the more elaborate notation of the stave, so the wise music-teachers of the modern world would do well if they used the T.S.F. principally as a stepping-stone to higher things. For who, having any wide survey of the history of music, or of any period of its development, can doubt for a moment which of the two systems is the higher? The staff is in truth a language of universal application, and the attempt to set up the T.S.F. system as a rival to it is bound to meet with ultimate failure. Nevertheless, a great number of people in England are now under the impression that the two systems are rivals, and tell you, with a smirk of complacency; that they do not sing from "the old notation."

But before going on to the practical effect of T.S.F. teaching, I may be excused for summing up a few of the charges brought against it by those trained musicians who have been at the pains to understand it. The abolition of the ideas "up" and "down" in connection with sound, is claimed as an advantage by the ordinary teacher, who can see that there is nothing actually high about a "high" note, or low about a "low" one. We hope that this abolition will not proceed so far that the Shakespearean commentator of the future will be puzzled to know what can have been meant by the line "that can sing both high and low." When all arguments have been exhausted to prove that one end of the keyboard, for example, is not in a more elevated position than the other, the human instinct still persists, and in the effort of singing a "high" note there will always be some psychological correspondence with the notion of actual altitude. A less doubtful defect of the T.S.F. system is the difficulty of reading anything like a score so as to give the composite idea of a harmonic progression by the sight of four rows of letters; it may be attained, but the difficulty of attaining it leaves all the difficulties of reading the usual notation far behind. The representation of rests, and in general of the endurance of notes, as well as of silences, is so imperfect



in T.S.F. that its strongest advocate will hardly claim that it is perfect in this way. The absence of any indication as to the length of time during which the one part upon which the singer's attention has to be fixed, should keep silence, makes it exceedingly difficult to impart even to an intelligent choir any composition of a polyphonic character. With a very first-rate conductor who can be trusted to give each part its cue, the result may be satisfactory, but as a rule it is one of a choir-trainer's great difficulties that singers will not understand that the blank space on the paper they are reading represents an exact space of time.

In the early days of the movement, I have heard that there was some difference of opinion concerning the notation of the minor mode in modern music. Whether this were so or not, the fact remains that the tonic of the minor mode is called *Lah*, so that the *Doh* is not quite as movable as some people might wish it to be. For, of course, the base, final, or keynote of the minor mode is the note a minor third below the keynote of the major scale to which it stands in the relation of "relative minor." It is not merely an offshoot as it were of the major scale, to be constantly referred to the keynote of that scale instead of to its own keynote. The same erroneous decision, as I venture to think it, is even more glaringly seen in the attempt to force modal music into the T.S.F. notation. Each final should be called *Doh*, and the only really logical way of adapting the new notation to the old scales would be to use the "accidental" syllables much more freely. The following is a table of the modes in what would be their T.S.F. notation if this were logically carried out (it will be observed that no modification of the syllable *Ray* appears to exist which would indicate the second step of the Phrygian mode):

I	III	V	VII	IX	XIII
Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Ionian
d	d	d	d	d	d
ta	ta	t	ta	ta	t
l	la	l	l	la	l
s	s	s	s	s	s
f	f	fe	f	f	f
ma	ma	m	m	ma	m
r	de	r	r	r	r
d	d	d	d	d	d

I wonder whether it is really the case that "the Roman Catholics like the notation because it fits in so well with the Gregorian system." (*Mus. Quarterly*, vol. iv, p. 194.) In one way no doubt it fits in well with the Gregorian system, in that its imperfect

notation of time is not felt as a drawback in singing Plainsong. But the expression of the modes in the T.S.F. system leaves a great deal to desire.

Another defect inherent in the system is in connection with its process of modulation. Sometimes half-way through a simple hymn-tune, the Sol-faist is required to change his keynote, and go through an elaborate mental calculation to the effect that the note he has approached as Soh is for the next few bars to be thought of as Doh. This is of course in regard to the simplest of all modulations, implying a half-close in the dominant; but whether complicated or not, the change of tonic does require a psychological change of attitude towards the old key and the new, which is beautifully left in a kind of uncertainty in the staff notation. The use of accidentals there is understood as indicating no new attitude towards another key; this, when required, is effected by a change of the whole key-signature. But every slightest modulation in T.S.F. requires a shifting of the mind to the new tonic, and, what is worse, a quite definite acceptance of the new key as established. Now in much of the music that has best stood the test of time, and in much that has been most universally accepted as the greatest, part of the charm it exercises over mankind is due to the gradual change in the hearer's attitude towards a new key, to the gradual discovery of the point to which the modulation is going to take him; his pleasure will be greatly lessened if he is obliged at every note to have a clear idea in his mind as to the whereabouts of the key he is stated to be in at the moment.

The weightiest objection which trained musicians have to T.S.F. is based on the quality of the music provided for its pupils. It is beyond question that some of the greatest choral compositions can be expressed in T.S.F. and for the popularization of such works as *Messiah* or *Elijah* by its means, we should, I suppose, be thankful, even though the vogue of these two masterpieces in England has prevented lovers of Handel and Mendelssohn from intimacy with the other oratorios of either composer. Perhaps some bold T.S.F. advocate has tried to put Bach's B minor mass into this notation, but, if so, I am sure that most people who have attempted to learn it by that notation will have flown to the safe simplicity of the staff. As the use of the T.S.F. system is virtually compulsory all over England, and as school inspectors are easily dazzled by feats of so-called "reading" which seem to them phenomenal, the financial success of the system has brought about the composition of an enormous quantity of music whose sole excuse is that it is well adapted for the notation for which

it is intended. Most of it has no other merit whatsoever, and it is a sad experience to go into a school in some part of England where all the children's voices are of beautiful quality and all or nearly all possess strong musical instinct, and to hear the kind of trash that is being forced into their throats and being called "good music." Nowhere is the commercialism of the musical world of England so rampant as in regard to the poisonous balderdash with which the taste of the children is being corrupted. I spoke above of "so-called reading"; it is only too evident that most teachers and inspectors of schools are quite satisfied when the children have read the notes together with the T.S.F. names for them, without regard to the words provided in their copies. Very few people seem to realize that the work of reading has only proceeded half-way when this is done; and here is another defect of the T.S.F. system, that the singer's mind is always hampered by the temptation to repeat, instead of the words put down for him, the actual syllables which he is accustomed to associate with the notes he sings.

As an independent musical system, even within its limited sphere of choral singing, the T.S.F. cannot take a very high place, though it is invaluable as a stepping-stone to the other notation. Apart from the intrinsic merits and defects of the system, we may consider some points of its practical working in England. Of course it has the very great merit of making choral societies a familiar feature of English country life, and so of providing the raw material for those competition festivals which are an ever-increasing influence in national music, and which will no doubt pursue their successful course now that the war is over. But the difficulty of expressing any of the more complicated kinds of music, and the kind of attitude generally adopted by Sol-faists towards real music, has caused the managers of many festivals to forbid any competing choir to use T.S.F. It is a merit, no doubt, that the cost of printing T.S.F. music is so low, but this is surely counterbalanced by the corresponding cheapness of the artistic quality usually attained in the compositions that are printed in it. While the system gives much encouragement to the cause of vocal or rather choral music, its unavoidable discouragement of instrumental music is a very serious drawback. For one cannot conceive of any advocate of T.S.F. being so enthusiastic as to attempt to play any instrument from his favourite notation. The experiment of printing instrumental compositions in T.S.F. may have been tried, but it has certainly made little way even with the public that is accustomed to use it for singing.

# UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM VERDI TO CAMILLE DU LOCLE (1866-76)

By J.-G. PROD'HOMME

**T**HE letters of Giuseppe Verdi, which we publish here for the first time, after the original manuscripts, were gathered from the Library of Archives of the Opéra, whose keeper, M. Banès, had informed us years ago, with his customary obligingness, of their existence. But the events of the period just past prevented us from undertaking their selection and publication.

Of the correspondence addressed by Verdi from 1866 to 1876 to his French librettist, Camille Du Locle, comprising more than two hundred letters or notes, we have chosen those which seemed to us to have the most important bearing on this decade of the maestro's life, which extends from *Don Carlos* to the *Requiem Mass* dedicated to the memory of Manzoni. It is true that these familiar epistles do not shine by reason of stylistic refinement, but therein resides their peculiar value; for they all the better depict the man as he was, with his somewhat rough frankness, his forthright sincerity, and that peasant simplicity which never forsook him, even at the height of his fame amid worldwide successes; and the artist no less, with his equally plainspoken and definitive likes and dislikes. Once again, on perusing these half-century-old pages, we recalled the so frequently cited epigram of Buffon's: "The style is the man."

Moreover, an analysis of his handwriting, of the maestro's own "graphics," made by a learned graphologist, M. Vauzanges, furnishes additional confirmation of the traits of his energetic and independent character under the control of a genial artistic temperament. "The first impression that emanates from it is an intense vitality, as of a nature peculiarly vigorous and vibrant. The intelligence reveals itself as clear, alert, and exact; the culture is visible in the simplifications, the numerous calligraphic forms, likewise indicating originality. The critical faculty is well developed, the liking for contrasts is marked, the sense of order is good. The graceful and lofty inspiration is manifested more especially through power. Some elegantly formed letters lend a certain distinction; but the general aspect of the handwriting, taken as a whole, is more energetic than elegant. The musician's writing presents, altogether,

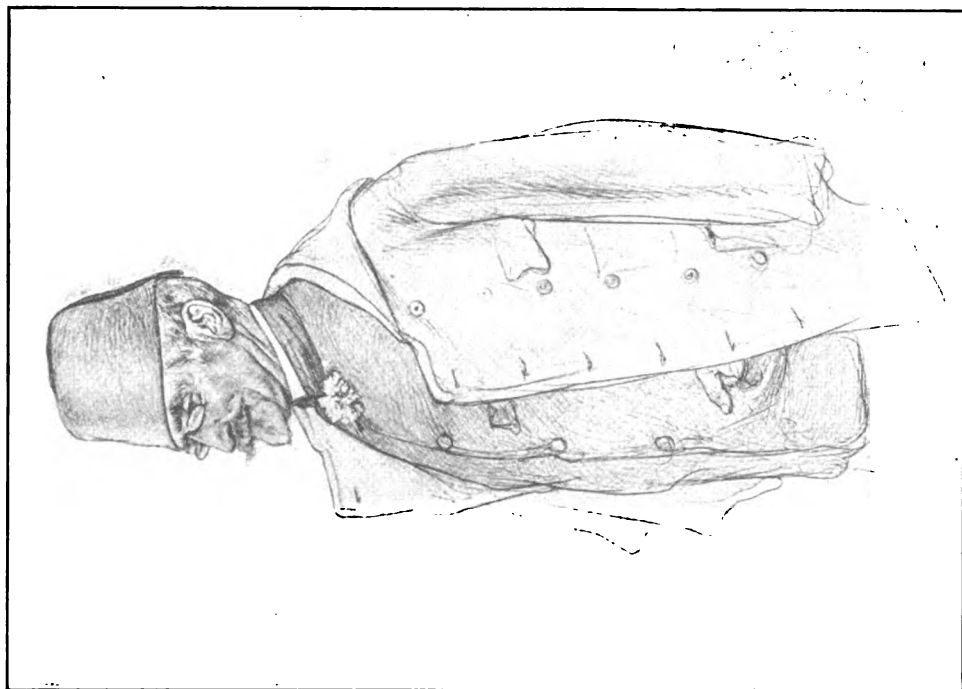
a character rather popular than genuinely aristocratic, thus differing from that of Händel, Rameau, or Gluck, for example. The talk of men seems more familiar to Verdi than the language of gods and heroes. Handwriting of this description reveals a strong individuality, not temporizing with its convictions but, on the contrary, clinging to them with obstination, although without seeking to impose them on others. The nature of the man is good, sufficiently affectionate, straightforward, loyal, and moderately communicative. Verdi did not like importunate persons, and was fond of withdrawing into the circle of his intimates. The convolute flourish surrounding his signature is a self-revelation in this respect, and the signature itself, of like dimensions with the text, betrays no pride. During fifty years it does not vary in letter after letter—a sign of constancy.” (Vauzanges, *l'Écriture des Musiciens célèbres*, Paris, 1913, pp. 192–195.)

In the “Souvenirs” of his publisher, Léon Escudier (1863), we may read the same conclusions from personal contact. With Verdi (so Escudier opines) his faults are the excesses of his very qualities. Coolly reserved when in company with mere acquaintances, he threw off constraint when among those to whom he had given his friendship—a friendship that only death could sunder. Stiff, frowning, unsociable, his enemies called him a *bear*, and this sobriquet did not seem to displease him; he himself was the first to adopt it (see especially his letter of September, 1868).

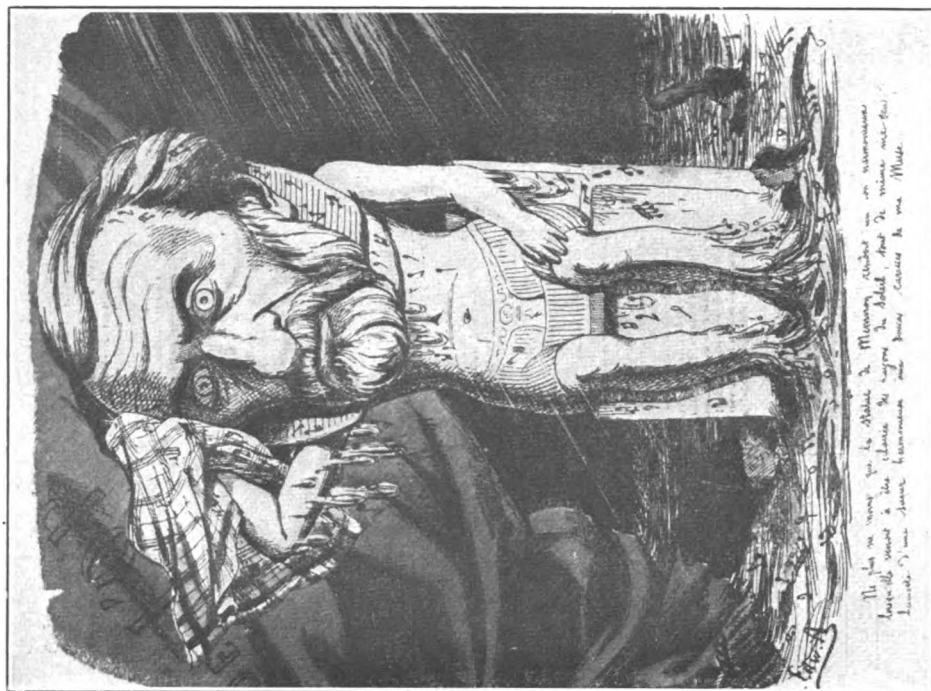
Camille Du Locle was one of his few chosen friends, and—even in letters dealing wholly with business matters—Verdi never failed to slip in some affectionate words. Relations between the French librettist and the Italian maestro probably found their inception at the time when they were discussing the adaptation of Schiller's *Don Carlos* as a piece for the Opéra at Paris. Up to that time Verdi had brought out in the “grande capitale” *Nabucco*, *Il Proscritto* (*Ernani*), *Le Due Foscari*, *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* at the Italiens, besides (in French) the two last-named works, his revised *Macbeth* and *Le Bal Masqué* at Carvalho's Théâtre-Lyrique. The Opéra had produced translations of *Jerusalem* (a new version of *I Lombardi*), *Louise Miller*, and—the first work written especially for this theatre to a French libretto—*Les Vêpres siciliennes*, during the Exposition of 1855.

Following a silence of five years—for Verdi, after *La Forza del Destino*, had written nothing but the French version of his *Macbeth*, which did not succeed—*Don Carlos* was his second attempt with a French libretto. It gave him slight matter for self-congratulation; and the eight months that he had to abide in Paris for the rehearsals





C. Du Locle  
Unpublished sketch by Allers



Caricature of Verdi (about 1880)

left a memory equally unpleasant and enduring. In his letters he omitted no opportunity of recalling it with undisguised bitterness. Our correspondence unfortunately breaks off before the representation of *Aida* in Paris (at first at the Italiens, later at the Opéra), which was followed, at a long interval, by *Otello* and *Falstaff*. But it appears that to the end he kept up his scathing criticism of "*la grande boutique*" (the big shop)—his familiar name for the Grand Opéra of Paris.

A great reader, Verdi kept himself informed concerning contemporary dramatic production, always on the lookout for some new subject calculated to awaken his inspiration and appeal to an audience; he would ask his collaborator and friend to send him a certain book or play, and would indicate by a critical word the value, from his viewpoint as a dramatic musician, of any given play or novel. But nothing of all he read during the ten years we are about to explore, could hold his attention. Only the "Egyptian programme" of Mariette, which it was apparently intended to offer, besides, to Gounod and Wagner, the subject of *Aida*, versified by Du Locle and thereafter translated into Italian by Ghislanzoni, could arrest him; and we know what a remarkable score—one might say, what a masterpiece—he made of it.

After *Aida*, he returned simply to Shakespeare—to Shakespeare, who certainly was Verdi's great literary idol, whom he admired above all the poets from whom he had borrowed subjects for operas—Byron, Schiller, Victor Hugo. After *Macbeth*, he had long cherished the idea of writing a *King Lear*; he himself sketched the scenario, which after his decease was found among his papers. He had also thought of *Cleopatra*. As for *Hamlet*, we shall read the few concise and severe lines which he addressed to Du Locle with regard to the libretto that Barbier and Carré concocted for Ambroise Thomas. "Povero Shakespeare!" he exclaims.

Attaching the highest importance to the action, the drama, Verdi, once in possession of a libretto, revised and corrected it to suit himself, recklessly overturning the sapient arrangement of airs and recitatives elaborated by his text-writer; for he was, above all, a man of the stage, even fonder of violent contrast than of purely musical effect, or, at least, not separating the one from the other. This it is that partly explains the opposition which his works met with on the part of the dilettanti of 1840.

Per contra, he cannot find stinging epithets enough to hurl at the stage-settings—too luxurious for his taste—of the Parisian Opéra, which for him are no substitute for the fire, the enthusiasm, that he encounters in the lesser Italian theatres.



Having written the score, or remodeled it for a revival in Italy or France, Verdi detested nothing so cordially as the rehearsals. But when this critical period was finally past, and the work on the stage, he demanded from his correspondent an unvarnished report of the reception accorded it by the public, fearing neither the criticisms of some nor the prejudices of others, and dreading above all things, with his honest and sincere artist-conscience, incapable of concessions, to be the dupe of accounts colored by a desire to please.

And now a few words concerning Camille Du Locle, the librettist of *Don Carlos* and *Aida*.

A son of the sculptor Ducommun Du Locle, known under the name of Daniel, he was born in 1832 at Orange (Vaucluse). The son-in-law and secretary of Perrin, the Director of the Opéra from 1862 to 1870, Du Locle had produced (with Méry) on that stage, in the same year as *Don Carlos*, *La Fiancée de Corinthe*, music by Duprato. In 1870 he was appointed Director of the Opéra-Comique (*la petite boutique*, as Verdi called it), a position which he had to vacate in 1876, after mounting Bizet's *Carmen*, in a very difficult situation, leaving to his father-in-law Perrin the task of setting its affairs in order before ceding his post to Carvalho.

A better artist than director, in the commercial sense of the term, Du Locle had no exaggerated fondness for the old-time repertory of his theatre, and a typical remark of his is still current. One evening when the receipts for *La Dame blanche* had been insignificant he observed, with unfeigned delight: "At last! The White Lady is no longer making money!"

Between times, Du Locle had versified the libretto of *Aida*, after a scenario by the learned Egyptologist Mariette Bey; thereafter he collaborated with Reyer, to whom he gave *Sigurd* and then *Salammbô* (after the celebrated Carthaginian romance by Flaubert). In 1892 he still produced *Hellé*, music by Alphonse Duvernoy, at the Opéra. He died in October, 1893, at Capri, where he had dwelt for several years.

In this correspondence will be found several letters written in French by the hand of Madame Verdi (Giuseppina Strepponi). This cantatrice, who had created *La Traviata*, became the maestro's second wife in 1859. At that time she was forty-three years old. She was born in Cremona, and died three years later than the maestro, in 1898.

J.-C. PROD'HOMME.

\* \* \*

Genoa, Feb. 19, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

I was glad indeed to receive your letter from Thebes<sup>1</sup>, and to learn that you are safe and sound, and satisfied with your journey. I am writing you immediately to Paris, where, if you arrive on the 20th as you say, this letter of mine will be among the first to grasp your hand most heartily and to give you a "welcome home." When we meet you shall give me a description of all the happenings on your travels, of the wonders you have seen, and of the beauties and blemishes of a land which once possessed a grandeur and a civilization which I could never bring myself to admire.

Now take a rest and, at your leisure, send me a libretto of *Hamlet*<sup>2</sup> directly it is printed, for I am curious to know how your poets have treated Shacspeare [*sic*].

You can readily imagine with what pleasure I again repeat "welcome home," and I dare not say with what delight I am looking forward to meeting you. Good-bye meanwhile. Best regards to your Maria, in which Peppina joins; and believe me now and ever

Your affectionate,  
G. Verdi.

Geneva, March 14, 1868.

Dear Du Locle,

Thanks for the information you sent me, and thanks for the libretto of *Hamlet*.

Poor Shacspeare! How they have maltreated him! What have they made of the character of Hamlet, so lofty, so original! And then, where is that grand, sweeping action, that elevated, unwonted, sublime atmosphere that one breathes when reading the English Hamlet? . . . This strikes me like a comic opera taken seriously. And Thomas has done wonders if he conquered success with a libretto futile as a whole and in detail, saving the duet in the third act between Hamlet and the Queen, which seems to me very well treated.

Now for *Don Carlos*, you say?

What do you think, *inter nos*, of Mazzolani?<sup>3</sup> Ah, if you could persuade your orchestra that there are effects which they neither obtain nor care to produce! And to think that the Bologna orchestra, conducted (say) by Mariani, sounded better than yours, and even the orchestra at Rome (which is a poor orchestra) brought out effects which yours does not know how to bring out! Ah, if you could convince the Sasse that her part is better than she thinks. With us, the Stolz took the leading part. You will see that she will take it at Milan, too! If you could work these two miracles at the Opéra, *Don Carlos* would be better than it has been so far.

For you, whose legs are perpetually in motion, would it not be well to come here for a few days and to return by way of Milan, to hear *Don Carlos*? It will go on the stage at the end of the month, perhaps

<sup>1</sup>Du Locle had just made a trip to Egypt.

<sup>2</sup>*Hamlet*, music by Ambroise Thomas, libretto by Barbier and Carré, was to be brought out at the Opéra on March 9th.

<sup>3</sup>Antonio Mazzolani, composer, singer, and teacher, born 1819, died 1900.

sooner. Here, too, about a month of rehearsals!! But hold!—let me tell you if it is worth your while to go to Milan. There is a sufficiently good company, for certain; an orchestra of one hundred players; a chorus of one hundred and twenty, forty-six basses for the choral finale. Ah, if Mariani were at Milan, success would be assured.

I leave you, my dear Du Locle, and inform you that your lovely [piece of] calligraphy has remained in Egypt. I have not been in the mood to decipher that phrase of Gevaert's, to whom please give my best regards.

Good-bye; kindest regards from us all for your Maria.

Write me, and always remember me kindly.

G. Verdi.

Busseto, St. Agata,  
May 8, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

Although I wrote you only three or four days ago, I let this letter follow, that you may satisfy my curiosity on one point, if you can.

I have seen a statement that you are doing *The Cid* with Sardou. Is it true? I will tell you why I ask this—possibly—indiscreet question. Last year, while I was still in Paris, they wrote me from St. Petersburg asking if I would like to write an opera, and suggesting *The Cid*, by Graziani. Having *Don Carlos* on my hands just then, I immediately answered, No. This year they have again approached me with the same proposition. I have not accepted it, and have small desire to accept it. And even this small desire would vanish if you were writing *The Cid*; and it does not seem possible that I could find a pretext.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to Mazzolani, I find it most singular that now he should have become impossible, when six months before everybody pinned their hopes on him and expected a success.

This is one of the phenomena which do not occur at the Opéra!

Do me the kindness to explain it. Either the climate of Paris is actually injurious to him, which is hard to believe, for Mazzolani is hardy and robust, or you have ruined him by ill-conducted studies (which is more likely).

Good-bye. Write me about *The Cid*, and believe me ever your

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, July 10, 1868.

Dear Du Locle,

I do not need to tell you, and I repeat for the hundredth time, it is a blessed hour for me whenever I receive a letter from you, whether you speak to me about your capital, or about your Opéra, but still more so when you write about yourself and your wife.

So I thank you ever so much, and Peppita likewise.

<sup>1</sup>A version of *The Cid* by Sardou, Du Locle and Gevaert was really announced at that time as if it were to be produced at the Opéra. *The Cid*, which inspired more than twenty-five operas given on the stage or in manuscript, has appeared but twice at the Opéra: with Sacchini, under the title of *Chimène*, in 1784, and the one by Massenet, produced Nov. 30, 1885 (libretto by Dennery, Louis Gallet, and Ed. Blau, after Guillen de Castro and Corneille).

I am not surprised at what you say about *Herculanum*,<sup>1</sup> and the Nilsson's exactions do surprise me. You devils of Parisians have said and done so much for her, that it is quite natural if her head has been turned a little. What will be still more natural and surprising for you will be to see the Direction of the *Opéra* passing under these *Caudine Forks*, and if it can do no better, engage her even at that rate.

As for *Don Carlos*.<sup>2</sup> I had pretty much forgotten it. What would you make of it with newly launched primadonnas and tenors?

Do you know that I have been in Milan? I had not seen it for twenty years, and found it completely renewed and very greatly embellished. There is a new Colonnade which is really a beautiful piece of art. While there I paid a visit to our great Poet.<sup>3</sup> Poor old man! If you could see him in all his simplicity and naturalness! I felt like falling on my knees before him, for he is in very deed a serious writer, who will be known not only as the first of our time, but will be acclaimed as one of the greatest of all times. He left a great book, a real book; the loveliest of our lyrics, and sacred Hymns, than which the Prophets wrote no better. And all is perfect!

What a long string of talk—very likely of no interest to you. You must excuse me! What would you have! . . . When I find something fine or good (and we have so little of either!), I stop in ecstasy to contemplate it.

We shall go to Genoa next week. I shall take some seabaths, and if they do not do me good I may go to Cauterets, not far from Bordeaux. On my way home I shall come to Paris to clasp your hand.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Kindest regards to your wife, in which Peppina joins me; and a kiss for the little girl. Write me often, and keep me in kind remembrance, and believe me

Your affectionate,  
G. Verdi.

Tabbiano, Sept. 8, 1868.

Bravo bravissimo, my dear Du Locle! That is truly a fine inspiration, that you should come and see this old he-bear at Busseto. At the present writing I am in Tabbiano,<sup>4</sup> a village at the foot of the Apennines, where there are strong sulphur baths; but I shall be at Sant' Agata, near Busseto, by the 16th. In case you come via the Simplon, you will get off at Milan. At Milan you will take the railway as far as Borgo S. Donnino; from Borgo S. Donnino a *vettura* takes you to my house—a short journey of an hour and a half. If you could let me know the day and hour when you expect to arrive in Borgo S. Donnino, you would

<sup>1</sup>*Herculanum*, opera by Méry and Hadot, music by Félicien David, given at the Opéra March 4, 1859, repeated in 1861 and 1863, had been awarded the year preceding the grand prize of 20,000 francs by the Institute. Christine Nilsson had just created Ophelia in A. Thomas's *Hamlet*.

<sup>2</sup>Verdi's *Don Carlos*, text by Méry and Du Locle, had scored forty-three representations at its production in 1867. Verdi, who had retained a very unpleasant recollection of the eight months of rehearsals of this work, was apparently not anxious to see it revived.

<sup>3</sup>Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), in memory of whom Verdi was to write, in 1874, a Requiem Mass.

<sup>4</sup>Verdi, who had given up going to Cauterets, the watering-place in the Pyrenees, was then in the little spa of Tabbiano, seven kilometers from Borgo S. Donnino, in the province of Parma, and consequently not far from his residence in Sant' Agata.

find me at the Station; at all events, you will find at the station some lean bucephalus that will bear you swiftly to me. If you return by way of the Corniche,<sup>1</sup> I will accompany you as far as Genoa, where you will see my imposing and humble abode. So hesitate no longer; a pack on your back, and away. You cannot imagine what a festival I and Peppina are enjoying in anticipation; and it would be still better if your adorable Maria were to accompany you.

So without greetings, till we meet again.

Affectionately,  
G. Verdi.<sup>2</sup>

Sant' Agata, Nov. 12, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

I did not reply earlier—pray excuse me—because I wanted to read all the Dramas you sent me; but, alas, not one of them is for me. The best are too long, too uproarious, and just now I do not care to deal with that kind. The exception might be *Adrienne Leco*.<sup>3</sup>

Most assuredly, there are many fine rôles, but none of genuine interest except that of Adrienne. Let us think no more of them. Might I dare ask you to send me others?

I venture this blunt refusal in reliance on your goodness of heart; for you have a good right to tell me to go to ———.

So take heart again, my dear Du Locle; look around, make inquiries, and send me another lot.

Please remember that I should not know what to do with dramas like *La Tour de Nesle*,<sup>4</sup> or *l'Abbaye de Castro*. I want things that are more touching, more simple, more in *our style*. I say in *our style* because doings like those in *La Tour de Nesle* or *l'Abbaye* now appear impossible to me.

We shall stay here this whole month, and perhaps longer, but shall be home again before Christmas. Tell me what's going on in the capital, and in the big shop. Remember us to your Maria; now for Christmas.

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Dec. 2, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

How many excuses I ought to proffer you, and how many thanks. I blush to think of all the letters you have written me that still remain unanswered. Shame! Shame! Shame! 11

What are you doing now with that poor Hisson,<sup>5</sup> who was so barbarously mutilated in that affair of *Les Huguenots*? Now, I believe that if you had not pushed her so hard, and had held rehearsals for only two

<sup>1</sup>The Corniche is the coast-road along the Mediterranean between Genoa and Marseilles.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is addressed to "Monsieur Edmond About, pour Mr. Camille Du Locle, à la Schlittenbach, par Saverne, Bas-Rhin."

<sup>3</sup>*Adrienne Lecouvreur*, by Scribe and Legouvé, produced in April, 1849.

<sup>4</sup>Drama by Alexandre Dumas and Fr. Gaillardet, produced in 1832.

<sup>5</sup>At the revival of *Les Huguenots*, which took place on Wednesday, Nov. 13, 1868, Hisson, who had sung *La Traviata* several times, was to have assumed the rôle of Valentine. In the eleventh hour it was recognized that this was an impossible task for her, and she was replaced by Marie Sass. For the rest, the representation, despite new mounting, was very mediocre. Furthermore, during the evening the death of Rossini was announced.

weeks, she would have acquitted herself admirably, if it is a fact that she possesses high talent and instinct for the stage.

Many thanks for the information concerning Rossini. Although not on terms of familiar intimacy with him, I deplore as everybody does the loss of the Great Artist. I have read all the funeral orations at his tomb. The one by Perrin is the finest. That by Thomas is the worst; he estimates him ill, from a too narrow point of view. The bounds of art are wider, or, rather, limitless. A Canzonetta can be a work of art as well as an operatic Grand Finale, if it possess the essential inspiration.

I am more than ever embarrassed by that business with St. Petersburg. Do not forget me, and help me if you can.

In view of your promise, I await another lot of dramas.

Kindest regards from us for your Maria, and—now for Christmas.

P. S. We shall stay here till the 10th.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Jan. 22, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

The big shop was not enough for you, so you have reached out for the little one. But how about Perrin? and the opera? Have you deserted him? Anyhow, I wish you all the good fortune that ever you can imagine.

You are always giving me hopes of seeing you here, but the time never comes. For the rest I have to tell you that in a few days I shall go to Milan to assist at the rehearsals of *La Forza del Destino*. I have reconstructed the last scene, and some ignoramus or other has promised Ricordi in my name that I should go. In case *Les Huguenots* is represented to-morrow at La Scala, I shall start for Milan the day after. So before going I am writing you a couple of lines.

Kindest regards meantime to your Maria from Peppita and myself. I clasp your hand affectionately, and remain,

Your loving,

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, April 20, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

I am very sorry that I left Genoa so suddenly without having had the pleasure of seeing *Sardou*,<sup>1</sup> which I have wished to do for a long time. But what would you have? The temptation to see the green fields was too great, now that the season of fine weather has come. So I am here, and shall probably stay here until it is time to go to Caunterets, where I hope, or rather expect, to see you.

What do you want me to say to you about your project in the Opéra-Comique? Do not lay too much stress on this notion, which may be ruinous for you, or at least, if not *ruinous*, of no benefit whatever. I have never attained to self-expression at the Opéra; there is no reason for believing that I should do better at the Opéra-Comique. So why lose time, reputation, and money? Honestly, I have a bear's disposition which does not go on all fours with the velvet of the Capital.

<sup>1</sup>Verdi, in search of a libretto, seems to have contemplated collaborating with Sardou, who was about to produce *Patrie*. See the two letters next-following.

Always bear me in kind remembrance, and always trust in the friendship of

G. Verdi.

P.S. Best regards to your most amiable better half. My wife has been in Cremona for two days to visit a sister. And I shall go there to-morrow, but only for a short, very short, time.

#### A LETTER FROM MADAME VERDI.<sup>1</sup>

October, 1869.

Dear Monsieur Du Locle,

I have read, you have read, he has read, but *Piccolino*, for all the fine things it contains, is not a piece for Verdi. It neither makes one laugh nor cry; there are no distinctly drawn characters; in a word, it lacks the incisiveness and originality Verdi would prefer in a comedy-opera. Amen—for this time, too. The trouble is, that Verdi cannot make up his mind to cross the Alps, and should you ever succeed in obtaining from him what you desire, it will be only at Paris, mark my word. For some time he has been fixed, rooted like his trees, in the Italian soil, and more particularly in the soil of Sant' Agata. If you knew all the splendid projects that have been flashed before his eyes, to tempt him—it is incredible that he should not have taken the trouble to consider them, at least for half a day. So it is, and I have not the strength to strive with that obstinate Breton!

I have seen the announcement of a fairy opera by Sardou and Offenbach.<sup>2</sup> What do you say of it? I have heard nothing further from Escudier directly; I have been assured, however, that his affairs are in the best of order and that he is making much money. So much the better. I do not know what country you will be in when this letter arrives in Paris, for nowadays it would appear that you make your abode with horses and locomotives; but sometime you will receive it somewhere.

Embrace your wife from me, and give little Claire a kiss.

Believe me ever, my dear Monsieur Du Locle,

Your devoted friend,  
Joséphine Verdi.

Busseto, Oct. 4, 1869.

P.S. We have heard a tenor named Paoletti very favorably spoken of, and it may help you that I mention him.

To what address should we write you now—Grand Opéra or Opéra-Comique?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>At this period there are several letters from Mme. Verdi in the correspondence addressed to Du Locle. The *Piccolino* mentioned here is a comedy-opera adapted from a piece by Sardou (1861), by de Lauzières-Thémine. As set to music by Mme. de Grandval, this work had been played at the Italiens on Jan. 6. Libretto revised by Nutter in 1876, with music by Guiraud.

<sup>2</sup>This was probably *Le Roi Carotte*, given at the Gatté in 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Du Locle was then a candidate for the directorship of the Opéra-Comique, with De Leuven.

Sant' Agata, Oct. 6, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

I have received *Patrie*,<sup>1</sup> and read it through in a trice. A fine drama—broad, powerful, and, above all, scenically effective. It's a pity that the woman's part should necessarily be hateful. There is, among so many, one situation that I find particularly new; when the conspirators throttle and bury beneath the snow the Spanish patrol. Fine, and novel! Thanks, a thousand thanks, my dear Du Locle, for not having neglected to send me this fine drama, which caused me to pass a delightful hour, and made me admire still more the genius of Sardou.

So you are continually astride of the railways, and have also actually found a *cancatrice*? I compliment you on your find; may you find all the rest, and so train your excellent troupe as to fill your theatre twice daily, thus filling your strongbox to overflowing!

And the big shop! marching triumphantly upon its laurels! Happy why who, hypnotizing their audiences with a stridulous, nerveless, bloodless musical performance, fill the theatre regularly. I see nothing new announced for this year! As for that, they are right.

I cannot tell you when and whether I shall come to Paris. It is easier for you, who are always in railway coaches, to make a flying trip to Italy. But there is nothing more to say about that. It is such a short journey now that one can, so to speak, breakfast in Paris and return to Italy for dinner.

Peppina sends her special regards both to you and your Maria, to whom please remember me too. Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Wish me well.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Dec. 8, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

Thank you for *Froufrou*,<sup>2</sup> which I read at a sitting, and if (as the *Revue*<sup>3</sup> says) it were all as perspicuous and original as the first three acts, this Drama would be extraordinarily fine; but the last two fall into commonplace, although they are effective, and tremendously so. However fine *Froufrou* may be, if I had to write at Paris I should prefer, to the *cuisine* (as you call it) of Maillach [*sic*] and Halévy, one that is finer and more piquant—that of Sardou, with Du Locle to write the verses. But, alas! it is not the trouble of writing an opera, or the judgment of the Parisian public, that restrains me, but simply the certainty that I cannot succeed in having my music played in Paris as I want it played. It's a most singular thing that an author must always find himself contradicted when he ventures an opinion, or snubbed when he makes a concession! In your musical theatres (be it said without a suspicion of an epigram) you are too knowing! Everyone wants to judge according to his own conception, his own taste, and, what is worse, according to a system, without taking into account the character or the individuality

<sup>1</sup>*Patrie*, drama in five acts by Sardou, had been given at the Porte-Saint-Martin, Mar. 18, 1869. Later, Sardou adapted it for an opera with L. Gallet, music by Paladilhe, given at the Opéra Dec. 20, 1886.

<sup>2</sup>*Froufrou*, by Meilhac and Halévy, had been represented at the Gymnase Dramatique on Oct. 30.

<sup>3</sup>*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, to which Verdi subscribed.



of the author. Everyone wants to give an opinion, wants to express a doubt, and the author, after living long in that atmosphere of doubts, cannot help, in the course of time, being somewhat shaken in his convictions, and ends by correcting, by accommodating, and, more correctly speaking, by spoiling his work. And thus it comes, if one finally has on one's hands not an opera cast all in one piece, but a mosaic, however fine you may think it, it is nothing but a mosaic.

You will raise the objection that at the Opéra they have a whole string of operatic masterworks made in this fashion. Call them masterworks, if you will; but I may be permitted to observe, that they would be far nearer perfection if one did not notice now and again the patches and the joinerwork. Surely, no one will call in question the genius of Rossini? Well, in spite of all his genius, in *William Tell* this fatal atmosphere of the Opéra is perceptible, and sometimes, though more rarely than in the case of other authors, one feels that there is something too much, or something too little, and that the musical devolution is not so free and sure as in *Il Barbieri*. With all this I do not mean to express disapproval of what is done in your city; I mean only to tell you that for me it is absolutely impossible to pass again under the *Caudine Forks* of your theatres; that, feeling as I do, no real success is possible unless I write as I feel, free from any influence whatsoever, and without reflecting that I am writing for Paris any more than for the folks in the moon. Moreover, it is necessary that the artists should sing, not in their way, but in my way; that the players and singers "who, in Paris, really possess great ability," should exhibit equally good will; and, finally, that all should depend on me, that everything should be controlled by a single will—my own. This may seem a trifle tyrannical!—and yet it is true. For if the opera is made at one cast, there is a Unity of Conception, and all factors should combine to present this *Unity*.

You may say, that nothing prevents the attainment of all this at Paris. No; in Italy it can be done, or, rather, I can always do it, but not in France. When I, for example, show myself in the *foyer* of an Italian theatre, no one dares to express an opinion, a criticism, before he is thoroughly informed, and no one ever risks asking irrelevant questions. Per contra, in the *foyer* of the *Opéra*, after four chords, one hears whispers all around like, "Oh, ce n'est pas bon"—"C'est commun"—"Ce n'est pas de bon goût"—"Ça n'ira pas à Paris." Whatever do these trivial words *commun—de bon goût—à Paris*—signify in the presence of a work of art, which ought to be universal!

The sum and substance of all this is, "that I am not a composer for Paris." I do not know that I possess sufficient talent, but I do know that my ideas with regard to art are greatly at variance with yours. I believe in Inspiration; you believe in Symmetry. I admit your criterion for the sake of argument; but I demand enthusiasm, which you do not possess, in feeling and forming an opinion.

What I want is Art, however it be manifested; not arrangement, artificiality, system, which you prefer. Am I wrong? Am I right? Be this as it may, I have good reason to assert that my ideas are greatly at variance with yours; and I will say, besides, that my backbone is not, like those of so many others, so pliant that I will give up and renounce my convictions, which are very profound and radical. And I should also

be very sorry to write for you, my dear Du Locle, an opera which you might have to withdraw after a dozen or two of representations, as Perrin did with *Don Carlos*. Were I a score of years younger I would say, "Let us see if your theatrical tendencies later take a turn more favorable to my notions." But time passes rapidly, and at present we cannot possibly come to an understanding, unless something unforeseen occurs that is quite beyond my ken. Should you come here, as you gave my wife reason to hope, we will talk it over again *in extenso*; if you don't come, it is likely that I shall make a trip to Paris towards the end of February.

If you do come to Genoa, I can no longer offer you *ravioli* [a species of pie or tart], because we have no Genoese cook, but at all events you will not die of hunger, and you will certainly find two friends who are most kindly disposed toward you, and to whom your presence will afford the keenest delight.

What a long letter!! I really had to give you some explanations, and you will excuse me for not having made them with greater brevity.

A thousand good wishes from us two for your dear Maria, and a kiss for little Claire.

Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

FROM MADAME VERDI TO DU LOCLE.

Dear M. Du Locle,

Please pardon my long delay in thanking you for the little diary which you were so kind as to send me, and which is very useful. Alas! you are not ignorant of the misfortune which has befallen me, and you can easily imagine what sad duties I have had to fulfill, and in how sorrowful a state they have left my mind and heart.

Verdi has not given up his trip to Paris. For that time I am saving myself to settle my obligations and to renew in person my acknowledgements for all your kindness to me.

Kindly excuse the disorderliness of this letter, and give my best regards to your charming wife. Believe me,

Your devoted,  
Joséphine Verdi.

Genoa, Jan. 9, 1870.

Genoa, Jan. 17, 1870.

The Baratti is 38, and has a fine stage presence. A good ballet-dancer. Good actress. For all that, the effect is always raw. The audience admires, but remains cool. The fault—her only fault—is her 38 years! Such are the conditions in Naples, and here, too. Every one tells me to take the Laurati. They all say that she cannot dance like the Baratti, that she cannot act like the Baratti, but that the effect on the public is sure. So think it over and engage the Laurati, if you can.

I see that matters in Paris are rather quiet. How long will this quiet last!

Is it true that M. Perrin will also take over the Théâtre-Lyrique? May heaven inspire him to abandon the routine of your musical theatres!

But he will go on with the idea of the big shop—a hoary stage with tainted blood, productive only of pedants and weaklings.

Good-bye, good-bye, my dear Du Locle. I hope to see you *soon*.  
G. Verdi.

P.S. Peppina has gone away. She is in Cremona, where her mother lies dead—an old lady of about eighty who has been ailing for a long time.

Genoa, Jan. 23, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Arch-rascally Du Locle! you have taken care not to send me the literary writings of Wagner. You are aware that I desire to know him from this side, too, and therefore I beg you to do what you have not done. I beg of you to send *Acte et Neron* along with them. I still believe that Nero might be a subject for a grand opera—always provided that it were in my style. So it would be impossible for the Opéra, but superlatively possible here.

*Froufrou* has been produced up to now at Naples, Florence, Bologna, Turin and Milan. A curious fact—everywhere the first three acts have been well received, and the last two have met with coolness or disapproval. This agrees, as you know, with my own opinion, but I did not expect to hear this unanimous verdict from the public. So I am obliged to give up the idea of making an opera of this drama.

I must speak to you again about the Baratti. Yesterday evening an *habitué* of the theatre told me that she is the best dancer in the ballet—that on the stage she does not look at all old. Corticelli, whom I have known since his début, was there and said the same thing; and, as regards her age, he could assure me that she was not over thirty-two.

I write you all this because I should not wish to have to blame myself later for my first severe pronouncement. After all, what is one to believe? The opinion of Naples was conveyed by a person worthy of all confidence. I can say the same of the one who spoke about her yesterday evening. You could best decide by seeing her yourself. For the rest, I believe that she is an excellent ballet-dancer. Just now she is having poor success at Naples, but to me that is no proof that she might not succeed overwhelmingly in Paris. When the Cerrito and the De Ferraris came to Paris, they were no longer an attraction in Italy.

Peppina has returned from Cremona, and, although much cast down—as she wrote you—by the death of her mother, is in very fair health, and desires to be remembered to you and your Maria. So do I. Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Feb. 18, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Do you want to help me in doing a good deed? It concerns a young maestro, known as one of our best, who has written a *Hamlet*<sup>1</sup>; his name is Faccio. I think you know him by name. This young maestro wishes to set Sardou's *Patrie* to music, and to this end he requires the permission of the author of the drama. He has applied to me, supposing that I am

<sup>1</sup>Given at Genoa in June, 1865, and at La Scala in Milan on Feb. 9, 1871.

acquainted with Sardou; and I apply to you. Could you, without inconveniencing yourself, do me a favor and assist a young maestro by asking Sardou's permission to let him set *Patrie* to music? I should be very grateful to you for helping Faccio. Let me hear from you as soon as possible, however the conclusion may be.

The weather continues wretched, and will consequently delay my coming to Paris. Before that, I am obliged to go to Sant' Agata. And now, what are you doing? Are things running smoothly?—and for how long? So you are firmly established at the Opéra-Comique? Do you like it? We shall have a long talk about it in Paris; for the present I am well posted, for, as you know, I read the *Figaro*.

The Sass has had a genuine success at Milan in *Les Huguenots*, and with her, and at least equal to her, the basso Medini.

Kindest regards to you and your Maria, from whom Peppina has had a letter.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Naples, Feb. 27, 1870.<sup>1</sup>

The rehearsals of *Aida* with orchestra have not yet begun. Directly after the first rehearsal I shall write you, or telegraph, and then you may be fairly certain that ten days thereafter the opera will be brought out. So you really intend coming to hear *Aida* again? Then do not expect any such representation as at Milan. Excepting the two ladies, you will not find other artists here equal to those, nor the choruses, nor all the rest of it. Still, the orchestra is good and will certainly rival the execution at Milan. As for the *mise en scène*, we are a thousand miles behind that in Milan. For a Frenchman, that means a great deal. You, who are surfeited with the luxury of the Opéra, will find it difficult to reconcile yourself to our poverty. As for myself, it is certain that if we could have had, in Milan, the mounting or the scenery that we had in Parma, the rest would have satisfied me. I greatly admire a fine frame, but it must not distract my attention from the picture. This is the reason that I am not overenthusiastic for the splendors of the Opéra.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Best regards from us for your Maria, and believe me ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Ma (March?) 26, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Two words to inform you that this evening I embark on the steamer for Nice and shall soon be in Paris. On arriving at Marseilles I shall send a telegram to you and also to Leon [Escudier] to let you know when I shall arrive.

It's an age since I had news from you; I am coming to get some. No good-bye, but "so long."

G. Verdi.

<sup>1</sup>Obviously it escaped Mr. Prod'homme's attention that the date Naples, Feb. 27, 1870, is impossible. The letter must have been written in 1873, for the simple reason that the dates for *Aida* are: Cairo, December 24, 1871; Milan, February 8, 1872; Parma, April, 1872; Naples, March 31, 1873.—Ed.

Genoa, Sunday  
[After April 25, 1870]

Dear Du Locle,

I am sending you only a couple of lines to say that we arrived here yesterday evening after a delightful journey, and to thank you a thousand times for all the kindness shown me during our brief sojourn in Paris.

I return the sketch, etc., etc. Do you wish me to tell you my opinion? It is a subject founded on a fallacy, and in which it would be very difficult to avoid certain well-known effects. Besides, it is not a comedy-opera. Take notice that I am not passing judgment, which would be too venturesome on my part, but merely offering an opinion. Seek, and seek again, and then in the end we shall find something.

Do not have *El Zapatero y el Rey* translated, for I have some one to translate it into Italian. A thousand kind wishes for your dear Maria and you from us both. We leave on Wednesday for Sant' Agata.

Good-bye from your

G. Verdi.

Genoa, April 25, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

In the book "*Études sur l'Espagne contemporaine*" I find a summary of a comedy by Lopez d'Ayala<sup>1</sup> that strikes me as excellent for the Opéra-Comique. Look up the work, open it at page 199, and begin reading at the sentence *Le premier acte se passe au milieu des provinces basques*, etc., etc., down to the end.

Of course, it is difficult to judge from a summary, but it seems to me that the subject would suit you. If you agree with me, find the comedy and have it translated. I leave to-morrow for Sant' Agata, so am writing in haste. Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, May 26, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I have read the Spanish drama by d'Ayala. It is made by a master-hand, but—one neither weeps nor laughs. It is cold, and to me it does not appear adapted for music. I am exceedingly vexed that I induced you to have the translation made. Put a stop to it, if it is not too late.

I have read the Egyptian program. It is well done; the *mise en scène* is splendid, and there are two or three situations which, if not wholly new, are certainly very fine. But who did it? Behind it all is the hand of an expert, familiar with such work, and thoroughly acquainted with the stage. Now let us consider the general feminine situation in Egypt, and then we shall decide. Who would have the Italian libretto made? Of course, it would have to be done in a hurry.

In great haste I squeeze your hand and say good-bye.

G. Verdi.

<sup>1</sup>Lopez de Ayala, Spanish statesman and dramaturgist, born in 1825 at Guadalcanal (Badajoz), died in Madrid Dec. 30, 1879. His "*Obras Completas*" have been published in seven volumes (1881-1886).

Sant' Agata, June 9, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

As yet I have not received the two *pièces* you sent me, but perhaps books take longer. I have read *Rédemption*.<sup>1</sup> It has little action, and is too serious. I should prefer some comic relief.

There is no telegraph wire to this place; it goes only to Borgo San Donnino. You might send telegrams addressed to *Borgo San Donnino, Italy, by post to Busseto*, but you would not gain much time; for instance, if you were to telegraph at 8 or 10 o'clock in the evening, I should receive the telegram at noon the next day. So one would gain twenty-four hours.

If an agreement is reached on *Egypt*, you would come here. That is what gives me the greatest pleasure. Now I am really desirous for an agreement, and between ourselves we can soon come to an understanding with regard to the arrangements to be made. Only try to allow yourself the longest time possible.

Meantime I will tell you good-bye "till then."

G. Verdi.

P.S. I shall write again immediately after having received and read the *pièces*.

Sant' Agata, June 2, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Here I am at work on *Egypt*; and first of all it is necessary for me to reserve time to compose the opera, because we have to do with a work of vast proportions (as if we had the *big Shop* in view), and because the Italian poet has to begin by finding thoughts to put into the mouths of the characters and turn them into poetry. Now, supposing that I can get through in time, these are the conditions.

- (1) I will have the libretto made at my expense.
- (2) I will send persons to Cairo, at my expense, to prepare and conduct the opera.
- (3) I will furnish copies of the score and relinquish all right and title to the libretto and music to the kingdom of Egypt only, reserving to myself all rights in libretto and music for all other parts of the world.

In compensation there shall be paid me the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand francs, drawn on the bank of Rothschild in Paris, the moment the score is sent off.

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This is a letter as dry and formal as a bill of exchange. You will pardon me, by dear Du Locle, if I do not dilate on other matters this time. Excuse me, and believe me ever

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

<sup>1</sup>Drama by Octave Feuillet (Théâtre du Vaudeville, 1860), after the romance of the same name (1849).

## TELEGRAPHIC REPLY FROM DU LOCLE TO THE PRECEDING LETTER.

[About June 15, 1870.<sup>1</sup>]

Italy. Verdi Borgo San Donnino per Busseto. Receive the following dispatch. Am authorized to inform you that the proposition one hundred fifty thousand francs is accepted. Sole condition opera shall be ready end January. Mariette. Answer. Will send definitive reply to Cairo. Greetings.—Du Locle.

## SKETCH OF THE AGREEMENT FOR AIDA IN VERDI'S HANDWRITING.

With this private agreement between.....and the composer of music G. Verdi.

(1) Maestro Verdi will compose an Italian *opera in musica* (adapted from a program, etc., etc.) entitled *Aida*, to be represented at the Italian Theatre at Cairo in the course of the month of January, 1871, the verse to be made by an Italian poet selected by the aforesaid Maestro.

(2) Maestro Verdi will retain all rights in the aforesaid score and libretto for all other parts of the world. In due time there shall be sent to Egypt a copy of the score from which the vocal and orchestral parts shall be copied.

(3) Maestro Verdi is not obligated to go to Cairo to conduct the rehearsals, but he will send a person on whom he relies, in order that the opera may be executed according to his intentions. The expenses of this person shall be borne by , and the expense for the poet, which at present can be set at twenty thousand *lire*, is likewise to be borne by

(4) While the opera is being played at Cairo, Maestro Verdi may, at the same time, have it played in some other large theatre in Europe.

(5) Maestro Verdi will indicate the artists who are to assume the characters.

(6) For this work there shall be paid to Maestro Verdi by the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand *lire*, payable in Paris at the Bank of Rotschild [*sic*] as soon as the score is sent off.

Sant' Agata, June 18, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I am impatient to see you—first, for the pleasure of seeing you, secondly, because I think that in a very short time we shall agree on those modifications which, it seems to me, it would be well to make in *Aida*. I have already considered them, and shall submit my ideas to you.

I asked Muzio<sup>2</sup> if he would be disposed to return to Cairo in case we made a contract. Now that I know that he is negotiating with Bagier,<sup>3</sup> I would not for all the world have him turn down an engagement at Paris, which would be much more advantageous for him.

<sup>1</sup>In a letter of the 16th, addressed to his wife, Du Locle announces that the arrangement is concluded and that Verdi's propositions have been accepted.

<sup>2</sup>Emanuele Muzio, a pupil of Verdi and his first wife, born in Zibello, near Busseto, Aug. 25, 1825, singing-teacher of the two Patti sisters, and orchestral conductor, in which capacity he was to conduct *Aida* at Cairo.

<sup>3</sup>Bagier had been director of the Théâtre-Italien in Paris since the season of 1862-3.

I am glad that that Egyptian contract has not yet been trumpeted abroad in the newspapers. It seems impossible that *Figaro* should not have got wind of it! Of course, it cannot be kept secret forever, but it will be quite unnecessary to make the terms known. The sum, at least, ought to be kept secret, for it would serve as a pretext for disturbing so many poor dead folk. There would be cited, without fail, the 400 scudi for the *Barbiere di Siviglia*; the poverty of Beethoven, the misery of Schubert, the vagabondage of Mozart in search of a living, etc., etc.

The two dramas you sent me recently also do not strike me as adapted for making a good opéra comique. The one by Feuillet lacks action—that by Sardou<sup>1</sup> has too much—that is to say, there is too much seeking after effect, too many smart conceits. One wearies in the end. We shall talk about it. Good-bye, but not for long!

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, July 15, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I have not written you before, because Giulio Ricordi has been here with the poet who will versify *Aida*. We have agreed upon everything; I hope soon to receive the verses for the first act, for then I myself could get to work. We have made some modifications in the duet in the third act between *Aida* and *Radames*. By this means the hatefulness of the betrayal is mitigated without in the least detracting from the scenic effect. I shall send it to you. I thank you for the information you have given me concerning the Egyptian musical instruments, which may be of service in various details. I should like to give them the *Fanfara* of the third act in the finale, but the effect, I fear, would fall flat. I assure that it is horribly distasteful to me to employ, for example, the instruments of Sax. They are tolerable in a more modern argument—but for the Pharaohs!! . . .

And tell me whether there were priestesses of Isis, or of any other divinity. In the books I have skimmed through I find that this service was reserved for men. Let me have these points, and give serious thought to the costumes. If only this matter is carefully done, I shall see that they will serve for Europe, too.

I hear that you have had a success with the *Ombra*.<sup>2</sup> I am glad of it, more especially if it continues and runs up receipts.

I have received the books from D (?). Make a note of it. Kindest regards to your dearest (*gentiliss.*).

Good-bye, good-bye,

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, July 23, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

From your silence I begin to suspect that the delirium of the war may have impelled even the directors of the Opéra-Comique to rush to the frontier! Alas! what a calamity is all this war, which, although foreseen for a long time, I could never have imagined as breaking out all

<sup>1</sup>This probably refers to *Fernande*, by Sardou, produced at the Gymnase Dramatique on March 18, 1870; and to *Dalila* by Octave Feuillet, a piece first played in 1857, which the Comédie-Française had also revived in March.

<sup>2</sup>Flotow's *l'Ombre*, libretto by Saint-Georges, had just come out at the Opéra-Comique on July the 7th.



of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue. What say you of it, my dear Du Locle?

I have heard nothing further about your contract. Perhaps the war has turned the heads of our Orientals, too—or, rather, has turned them aside from matters theatrical. To me they are indifferent, and what we cannot do now we shall do later, and later still. Only we have to think about the libretto, of which nearly half is already done.

So pray write to me. First tell me about yourself; then about your theatre; then about the Egyptian contract.

Good-bye, good-bye. Kindest regards from us for your Maria, and believe me ever your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Aug. 22, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I am heartsore over the news from France, and wish that I were, not an individual, but government and nation in one, to do what is not done—and perhaps, alas! cannot be done!!

Yesterday I had allowed my soul to hope, to-day I am prostrated! Up to now there is a certain fatality in this war, undertaken—it must be said—with none too much forethought. But French valor will end by overcoming destiny and that fatality you have hitherto encountered! Dear Du Locle, a hundred times I have started to write you, and a hundred times the pen has fallen from my hand. I have seen how About, lost for several days, was finally found! I know how well you love him, and what a consolation it must have been to you to learn that he was among the living, and unharmed! I do not dare ask you for a line, but, if you will and can, write only to tell me that you, your wife, your dear ones, are well—I shall be truly grateful!

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Take heart, and think kindly of  
Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Aug. 26, 1870.

Dearest Du Locle,

Under present conditions I have really not ventured to speak to you about the Cairo contract. You ask me for it, and I send it herewith, with my signature, but with reservations regarding two articles which you will find justified, and will have approved by Sig. Mariette.

You will have the goodness, I trust, to demand for me the fifty thousand francs for which I send you the receipt. Take from that sum two thousand francs and give them, in whatever way you think best, in aid of your brave and unfortunate wounded. With the remaining forty-eight thousand buy me drafts on Italy. Keep the papers by you, and give them to me the first time we see each other—and I hope it will be soon.

I wrote you yesterday. To-day I have only to press your hand and say that I love you dearly.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Among Du Locle's papers we find, dated Oct. 22, 1870, a bill from the metal-founder Barbedienne, made out to Du Locle, 37 rue Le Peletier: "A Florentine Singer No. 3 art bronze by Paul Du Bois. Legend: Verdi aux blessés français. Net, 530 fr." In Verdi's letters there is no passage referring to the purchase of this art bronze, whose fate is unknown to us.

MME. VERDI AND VERDI TO DU LOCLE.

Genoa, Feb. 4, 1871.

Being the most expert in deciphering your handwriting, it was I who read your letter of the 22d (arrived to-day) to Verdi and Corticelli, who listened with profound emotion, for we all love you, dear friend, and all of us love our sublime, devoted France. I read your letter brokenly; tears choked my voice while perusing these lines that told, with lofty simplicity, of miracles of self-abnegation, of greatness of soul, of patriotism, wrought amidst sacrifices and privations without end! Poor, dear Du Locle!—may blessings fall on you and on that great country, even more admirable in disaster than in prosperity! Paris has capitulated; but, while its capitulation was expected and inevitable, its resistance has surpassed anything that one could imagine, whether in length or in heroism! A few days ago I wrote your wife, who must be suffering greatly away from you, unable to aid you in the least in your works of charity among your sick and wounded. From here I can see how you, with your eminently virile nature, and your exquisite, almost feminine delicacy, are helping, encouraging, consoling these glorious victims of a barbarous war, who have found balm for their anguish beneath your hospitable roof. Again I say—blessings on you!!

I send this letter by way of Brussels, in order that it may reach you more surely and sooner. Verdi wishes to add some lines, so I make room for him.

In your heart of hearts you know, dear Du Locle, that in Genoa there are two hearts that love you—two friends!—Good-bye! good-bye!

Joséphine Verdi.

Dear Du Locle,

You know me, and I know that you will believe me when I tell you that I suffer with you and that my sorrow is equal to yours in the great disaster that has overtaken your country. We, far from the scene, saw matters clearly, and foresaw the immense catastrophe. In spite of this, the news came to us as though unexpected, because hope never deserts one, especially him who suffers! What can I say to you? Join you in execration? No! You of Paris, so heroic in resistance, will now be noble and resigned in misfortune. Be prudent, and the future, I hope, will be propitious to you. I need not tell you that in me you have a friend who loves you greatly, and on whom you can rely in all things and for all things.

I press your hand and say, with aching heart, good-bye!

Affectionately,

G. Verdi.

(In Mme. Verdi's hand.)

P.S. Write us a line about our mutual friends and acquaintances—one dreads to pronounce their names!

Genoa, April 21, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

Am very glad to hear that you are in Arcachon. Have thought much of you, particularly during these recent days of such grievous vicissitudes for your country—but at least you are distant and in the bosom of your family! A piece of good luck, after all! What shall I

say to you about the last calamity in France? It is far worse, a thousand times worse, than lost battles! From the havoc of war, a great nation recovers easily after some years of self-denial and self-sacrifice, but who can foretell the consequences of this fearful social struggle!

We shall leave Genoa to-morrow, and return to our corner in Sant' Agata. When shall we meet?—who knows, and who can tell? I expect to come to Paris, but at present cannot decide on anything.

Give my most affectionate regards to your Maria, who must have suffered. A kiss to Claire. With much love, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Dear Camille, dear Marie,

I shall say nothing about the Prussians or about the conflict with your brothers. Your souls must be lacerated without a retelling of these mournful chapters. I shall only say that I love you both, and wish for your dear, unhappy France an end of her woes! I embrace you, and am, with all my heart, your

Joséphine Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 6, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I sent you a letter to Alançon about twelve days ago, and Peppina also wrote to your wife at the same address—now I have received yours of June 1 from Paris, and am very glad that you have not had to suffer malicious injuries. I shall not mention your disconsolate country, for it is of no avail to reopen a wound that still aches. I can only counsel your beautiful land to heal her own hurts, and with such resources this will be readily realized if your men of politics look around them, and do not blame others for their own difficulties. So long as you have *Trochus*, who have eyes only to see *Italian corruption*, and do not perceive the fatal infirmities which they bear in their own breasts, more and yet more woes are indeed to be feared!

Draneth Bey was here for a few hours, and told me he would come back later with *Mariette*. Oh, if you could be the third! from the moment you came to Aix,<sup>1</sup> you cannot imagine what pleasure Peppina and I would have. Anyhow, whether with Signor Bey or by yourself, I expect you, and ardently wish for your coming, all the more because just now it will be very difficult for me to come to Paris.

Once again I repeat that I am very glad that you have not had to suffer malicious injuries, and that I wish and hope all good things for you with all my heart for the future.

Greetings from us for your Maria. I embrace you most heartily. Good-bye. Affectionately

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 17, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I know that Paris is rallying and will recover her former brilliancy, and I wish that she may prosper and find a stable government, for the peace of yourselves, ourselves, and all the world. But what am I interfering in? By this time you will have received my reply of June 1,

<sup>1</sup>Probably Aix-les-Bains, in Savoy.

in which I told you that I positively expect to see you, not in Paris, but here from the moment that you come to Aix. I believe, moreover, that I have informed you that Mariette Bey is coming to Europe, and in case he should first go to Paris he will be well informed as to how matters stand with regard to Aida. As you know, *Draneth Bey* was here for a few hours. He has engaged the *Pozzoni* as the artist for the part of Aida, but he still has no mezzo-soprano for Amneris. He wanted to have this rôle adapted for the *Sass*, but that is impossible for a thousand reasons. I wrote him that I should have a mezzo-soprano who would serve our turn, and he answered me that the pecuniary resources were exhausted! Then why engage the *Sass* when it was certain that she would not be needed? Meanwhile, time is passing, and later perhaps we shall find ourselves in trouble.

And you, I fancy, are at work from morning to night! Poor Du Locle! Courage, courage—peace will return.

Peppina has received a dear, good letter from your wife, a real outpouring of the heart.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. About the middle of July we shall go to Genoa for a few days. Au revoir, then, there or here.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

MME. VERDI TO M. AND MME. DU LOCLE.

Dear Monsieur Du Locle,

Thank you for the photographs you were so kind as to send us. We study them with a tremulous interest; but how one's heart is oppressed by them! How could a nation so amiable, so keen-witted, so kindly in a calm frame of mind, become so frantic, so cruel, in its revolutionary turmoil? Alas! it is only too true: man is everywhere and always the same when blinded by passion. Progress is like the vast swell of the ocean; it advances to a certain point fixed by some mysterious power, and then retreats to begin anew its eternal repetition of the same movement. Under what form of government are you living now? If it is that of Henry V [HENRY V!!?] or that of the house of Orleans,<sup>1</sup> we shall have the war for the Pope! It is a dreadful thing to think of, and I wish I could, though I cannot, share your opinion and your assurance in this regard. I read with delight the passage in your letter that says, "I have taken note of your plan for a trip to Genoa, for my own to . . ." (I could not make out where). Well, dear friend, I hope you will make an excursion thitherward, and although at Genoa in the summer we are merely camping out, I trust that you will come straight to us and be so kind as to put up with what we can offer you. The memory of what you suffered during the siege will make the bed and board of your friends grateful to you.

We shall leave for Genoa about the 18th or 20th of July, and shall return to the country about the 11th of August. Au revoir then very soon, dear M. Du Locle.

Your letter touched me, my dear Marie! You are so frank, so good, so unaffected in your manner of expressing yourself, that I seemed

<sup>1</sup>The comte de Chambord (Henri V); the comte de Paris (Philippe d'Orléans).

while reading to hear the sound of your voice, and to see that sweet face, so saddened by the fearful disasters that have overwhelmed you! I wish it were all over, but I do not believe it, and I am afraid that the war has only changed its direction. It was against the North, it will be against the South. That would be heartbreaking! But let us not anticipate misfortunes; they always come too soon!

I thank you for all the details you gave me, which I should not have ventured to ask you for. It is an evidence of confidence which I cherish, and of which I think myself not undeserving, for I love you both and take a genuine interest in everything that concerns you. So in spite of the destruction and ruin in Paris, neither you nor yours have had to suffer directly and materially in any way? Let us thank God together, dear Marie, for there is something miraculous in that, more especially as regards the *hôtel* of your old aunt, so near to the conflagration. As for Madame Perrin, I can see her, calm and grave, controlling her agitation for the sake of her loved ones. To her, and to all your dear family, I beg you to give my respects and cordial greetings.

At what a moment your poor Auber departed this life!<sup>1</sup> In what a state did he leave that Paris which he so dearly loved! It appears that Thomas will be his successor, and that is right. I hope to see your Camille in a few days, and you may imagine with what delight I shall press his hand after all that has happened! A kiss for your children, and another for you, my dear Madame Du Locle, from your friend.

Joséphine Verdi.

Busseto, July 3, 1871.

Genoa, July 20, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I hear that Mariette Bey is in Paris at 170, rue de Rivoli, and I beg you to go to him and tell him that something is going wrong in this Aida matter.

*Draneth Bey* has not yet found, or has not wanted to find, the *mezzo-soprano* for the part of Amneris, and now he writes me once more that he is out of funds!! How am I to blame for it? And why didn't he stop to think before he spent it all!! . . .

Draneth insists on getting the libretto of Aida so that he can send it to Mariette, but I cannot send it to him before this question is settled. Nevertheless, in order not to lose time, I send the libretto to you, and if you find that Mariette can settle this difficulty, you may deliver it to him for executing the directions concerning the costumes and scenery.

Under this I send a copy of the letter that I wrote to-day to Draneth, so that you may have a succinct survey of what has happened.

We have been in Genoa since yesterday evening, and shall remain here some three weeks. Now then—are you coming here?

Best regards from Peppina and myself.

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

P.S. Let me have a line from you as soon as you receive the libretto.

<sup>1</sup>Auber died during the Commune, on May 12, 1871.

Genoa, July 20, 1871.

On returning to Genoa I received your kind favor of the 17th.

It seems to me that before sending the libretto of *Aida* it should be decided who is to execute the part of Amneris. As I had the honor to inform you previously, neither the Sass nor the Grassi is, or ever was, a mezzo-soprano. You say that the Grossi sings *La Favorita*, and Fides in *Le Prophet*. Yes; and the Alboni has sung the *Gazza ladra*, and (I think) *La Sonnambula*, and even the part of Carlo V in *Ernani*!! But what of that? It signifies nothing more nor less than that the singers and managers did not scruple in the least to manhandle the Authors' creations, or to let them be manhandled.

Permit me to relate a bit of history concerning this same *Aida*.

I wrote the opera for the last season, and it was for no fault of mine that the opera was not produced.

I was requested to defer its production until the year following, a proposition to which I assented without protest, although it was greatly to my disadvantage.

As early as Jan. 5 I mentioned that the part of Amneris was written for a mezzo-soprano, and later I asked that the conductor of the orchestra should not be selected without giving me due notice (because I was always hoping to get Mariani).

While I was carrying on these negotiations, another conductor was engaged, and no thought has been given for engaging a mezzo-soprano!! Why is this?—and why, when an opera written to special order is involved, is care not taken at the outset to provide everything, all the constituent elements that could be required for its production? I find it very strange that this was not done, and Your Excellency will permit me to observe, that this is not the way to obtain a satisfactory result and a success.

I have the honor to subscribe myself

Your obt. servt.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Dec. 25, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

Have received yours of the 22nd, and unfortunately the figure that Granger demands is obliterated. Do me the kindness to repeat it in your next, and then, of course, I can tell Signora Stolz what it is. I am sending this letter of mine to Leo [Escudier], enclosing the measures which you require, and it will be forwarded to Paris, thus gaining 24 hours.

All this is as it should be, but Granger asks too much time for fulfilling the provisions of his contract. Here the rehearsals are advanced—the singers know their parts; the choruses are so-so; the mountings are nearly ready; and it may well be that precisely on the 20th (which is Sunday, the day always chosen for the premières) the production will take place. So pray see to it that Granger has everything ready not later than the 15th, so that it may be in Milan by the 18th. Keep a sharp lookout in this matter, for delay would be absolutely ruinous. And look out that the work is done as it ought to be. Write me directly about this.

I wrote you that Peragallo had paid my moneys after all; but if you wish to be my banker, do not get angry, and pay away—.

You will have received news from Cairo. I have two telegrams, which are favorable. We shall see if they are confirmed. I am told that the Viceroy has invited Reyer. Oh bravo!—that is indeed a good friend!!! and the Viceroy has a keen nose. As for that, it is better thus than to read the nauseating praise of fulsome reports. So send me without delay the article that Reyer writes for the *Débats*.<sup>1</sup> There will be a cannonade, for certain. But don't be frightened, I am thoroughly steeled by indifference.

Ever your affectionate

G. Verdi.

(*In the handwriting of T. Stolz.*)

P.S. All right so far. Teresa Stolz.

Genoa, Dec. 29, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I know that Peppina wrote to your wife yesterday; but I too want to send you a few lines to wish you everything that is finest and best, health and prosperity. And whatever is better that you may desire.

I shall leave for Milan on Wednesday the 2nd to begin the rehearsals of *Aida*. So address your letters to Milan. I really expect that the première will be on the 20th, and therefore I implore you and beg you not to forget that the work which Granger is doing for the Stolz should be in Milan by the 18th at the very latest.<sup>2</sup> For the love of God! If this miscarries, it will be a most serious matter. Look out for it, and let me know about it.

As soon as the rehearsals have commenced I shall write to tell you more positively when the day will be. Then you can make your arrangements for coming to Milan. How I long to see you!—but alas! poor Du Locle, if you were to assist at a fiasco! Well, at all events you will experience a sensation and see how decisive and unmistakable a fiasco in Italy is.

Good-bye, I press your hand and renew my good wishes for you and all your family, and am as ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

P.S. It appears that *Aida* did not go badly at Cairo. That is, according to the telegrams. The letters are yet to be seen. Send Reyer's article to me at Milan. Address to "Albergo Milano, Milano."

Milan, Jan. 26, 1872.

Yesterday the Stolz received her *bijoux*, with which she is greatly pleased. Now I beg you to pay Granger and send me the receipted bill.

In addition I send you sincerest thanks, and will forthwith repay the money you have laid out.

<sup>1</sup>Reyer wrote an introductory article on *Aida* for the *Débats*, dated Dec. 23, 1871. On returning from a trip to upper Egypt, he sent off a second article on Feb. 3, after the fifth performance. These two articles, very favorable to Verdi's new work, were reprinted in "Notes de Musique" (Paris, 1875, pp. 185-213) under the caption, "Notes de Musique."

<sup>2</sup>This refers to costumes or accessories for the principal interpreter of *Aida*.

It is almost certain that *Aida* will come out on Feb. 3. I shall write you again, and if things go as I expect towards the end of this month, I shall send you a telegram.

Meantime good-bye in haste, and a hearty handshake.

G. Verdi.

Parma, April 17, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

Your letter reached me rather late, because I had left Genoa—and I answer you rather late because I have not had time to breathe, so to speak. We have reached the final rehearsal of *Aida*, and you can imagine how busy we are! *Aida* comes out Sunday, and the performance will be very nearly like that at Milan, both musically and scenically. On account of these affairs I have not been able as yet to attend to David. but Ricordi is coming here to-day, and I shall turn the matter over to him.

You are translating *Aida*? For the Opéra, mayhap? Oh! oh! I should be very [illegible] for this combination! In that theatre I accept the *mise en scène* (although it's too big and pretentious for me), but, on the musical side, all that is done there is in no way acceptable to me. I have no luck in that theatre! Not a bit of it! Let us stay as we are! I am so comfortable here.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Peppina, who is with me, sends very kindest regards to your Marie, and I squeeze your hand with all my heart.

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 22, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

You were quite right to complain that I have not written you for an age. It is entirely my own fault, for recently I have had hardly anything to do. I am living in complete idleness; nobody disturbs me, and even the Po, which has ruined so much of the Ferrarese countryside, has left us in peace. All the better for us—but those poor people!! What destruction!! It includes no less than one hundred square kilometers, all inundated. It is the most fertile soil one can conceive of! Imagine what resources are gone to waste!

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Whatever do you tell me?

Reyer!!! Reyer convinced? That is more overwhelming than the inundation of Ferrara. Only it is less ruinous! All the better! and all the better if *Aida* affords pleasure to the reader. I believe it will lose nothing in performance, if it is played as I would have it. But that is very difficult at Paris!

And you—how do you feel? Is your little shop<sup>1</sup> still prospering? It looks that way to me, and I wish you the same for the future.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. And how has the translation of *Aida* turned out? Put modesty aside, for there are times when one should say exactly what one thinks.

Give our kindest regards to your dear Marie, and believe me ever and ever

Affectionately

G. Verdi.

<sup>1</sup>The Opéra-Comique.



Naples, Nov. 16, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

It is an age since I wrote you, but you understand that the journey, the matters I had to attend to at Sant' Agata, and the getting settled here, have deprived me of invaluable time.

I have been here with Peppina about ten days; the rehearsals of Don Carlos are well advanced. The tenor intended for Don Carlos was taken sick, and we have to be content that he has a fine voice, but an unhappy face. But my basses are below par; they are three baritones who are not quite sure [unintelligible]. Before the end of the month we shall go on the stage—at least I hope so.

And you—what are you doing? I am rejoiced with your little shop—and how is the big shop getting on?

Write me here with the simple address

Maestro Verdi  
Napoli.

All kinds of good wishes to you all, in which my wife joins. Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

P.S. Please write post-haste to tell me whether the monks in the last scene in Don Carlos are Inquisitors or brethren of the monastery of San Giusto. Lose no time in answering this. Good-bye.

Naples, Dec. 15, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

What! what! You have not received my letter, or, I should say, my two letters mailed after the representation of Don Carlos the same day on which I wrote to Muzio and Leon!

Those few words have been lost in the post—but it matters little—no; yet it does matter a great deal, because you have accused me, with reason, of a lack of courtesy and consideration for you.

Well, our Don Carlos is doing finely and the public is extremely pleased with it. Indeed, if not everything is good, many portions of it are superlatively good. The two ladies and the baritone are very fine. The tenor has a lovely voice and is intelligent, but unhappily his figure is too stout for a lover. The basses are just barely mediocre. The *mise en scène* deplorable as regards costuming of the crowd. Some scenes are good. Men's chorusses good. Orchestra excellent. In the ensemble of the musical execution there is a *verve* and *brio* that are always lacking in Paris. Here Don Carlos takes half an hour less than in Paris. It begins at 8 and ends at 12:05.

Unfortunately the performances are suspended because the Stolz has a throat disorder of quite a serious nature.

I shall expect you for Aida, which goes on in February.

With all my heart I wish you a monster success with *Giulietta e Romeo*.<sup>1</sup>

Write me, and believe me ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

<sup>1</sup>An allusion to the approaching representation of *Roméo et Juliette*, by Gounod which, brought out at Carvalho's Théâtre-Lyrique, was transferred to the Opéra-Comique Jan. 20, 1873.

## Unpublished Letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle 101

Naples, Jan. 2, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

Thanks for your letter and kind wishes, which, as you may easily imagine, Peppina and I return in kind with fifty hearts. I want to see you here as much as you do, but fear that we ourselves will leave Naples very shortly, because the theatre is probably going to close. The management, which has been improvident, and failed to prepare any alternative opera for the Ballo,<sup>1</sup> was taken by surprise by the Stolz's indisposition, which has persisted for three weeks. During this forced suspension of the representations of Don Carlos disorganization has set in, and the management finds itself in a very tight place. If the municipality does not help, the management cannot save itself, but the municipality will not help, because of a personal grudge against the management.

Well, all the better for me. I shall fatigue myself the less, and can contemplate the beauties of Naples at my ease, and enjoy the mildness of the climate. The windows open all day at a temperature of 15° Réaumur! which is about 20° Centigrade! What say you to that, in the midst of your damp, and fog, and cold?

Now good-bye. Should you not come to Naples, it is not impossible that I may go to Paris this Spring. So au revoir and Happy New Year, and greetings to all!

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 24, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

To-morrow we shall leave for Paris, but we are going to stop over a day in Turin, and shall not arrive till Sunday. I shall let you know the hour.

I beg, I entreat, I implore you not to put yourself out in any way on my account, and, above all, to tell no one that I am in Paris. I shall not visit any of the theatres, especially the musical ones. I am coming to see my friends, to visit Paris, and to get the rest I so much need.

Au revoir! Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Turin, L [July?] 13, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

Here we are the very next evening in Italy, after a delightful journey. The *Tunel* is really a sensational affair! The splendid internal illumination by gas, and the profound external darkness, the fresh air, and not to be suffocated by smoke, is a very fine thing. And besides, three thousand metres of earth and stone overhead! !——

We shall not leave Turin until 12 o'clock; we breakfast at Piacenza, and at 7 shall be in Sant' Agata.

And now, what can I say to you, my dear Du Locle? How can I thank you for all the kindness shown my wife and myself during our too long sojourn in Paris? You have treated us with a courtesy and con-

<sup>1</sup>*Il Ballo in Maschera.*

sideration certainly not to be excelled; and I, with a faint blush mantling my forehead, can only say, thank you, thank you, a thousand times.

Good-bye. Write me, always to the usual address.

Good-bye. And wish me well, as I do you.

G. Verdi.

P.S. When you write to your Maria, do not fail to send her our very best regards. Once more, good-bye.

Sant' Agata, Nov. 3, 1873.

My Dear Du Locle,

I have received your letter, and well understand what grief you felt at the destruction of the Opéra.<sup>1</sup> You who loved it, and who had passed so many delightful hours in it. I myself was moved by the sorrowful tidings—I who, all four times that I have entered it in the capacity of an artist, have not invariably lived through pleasurable moments. It is certainly a genuine calamity for the artists and operatives belonging to the Opéra. However, the other edifice will be ready very soon, and besides, your country is so rich that it will easily provide for the needs of all.

Keep me continually informed about yourself, and believe me

Affectionately

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Dec. 28, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

I thank you for your kind wishes, which arrived most punctually on my birthday. And I return them for you and all your family, also on the part of Peppina. I wish you what you desire, even to being director of the New Opéra. But have a care! These theatres once in a while are mantraps! I would not see you caught for all the gold in the world.

Day after to-morrow, on Wednesday, we shall be in Genoa, to remain there the rest of the winter. Good-bye, and believe me

Affectionately

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Feb. 24, 1874.

Dear Du Locle,

Greetings to my well-beloved liege lord—to the sole and singular Tyrant and despot of the *Little Shop*,<sup>2</sup> reserving to myself the business of kneeling when you shall have become Czar and Sultan of the *Big One*. You say nothing about Carvalho! What has happened? Has he played a sly trick on you, and is everything quite in order? Never mind—however and whatever things may be, I wish you tranquil prosperity, and, above all, that you may see your dreams more than realized.

I am working on my mass, and really with great pleasure. I feel as though I had become a serious man, and were no longer a "barker" for the public, who, to the accompaniment of the big drum, calls out, "*Here you are! here you are! Walk in! etc.*" You must understand

<sup>1</sup>The Opéra was burned down Oct. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Du Locle had just taken over the directorship of the Opéra-Comique. He retained it only up to the middle of 1876, when Carvalho succeeded him.

that now, when I think of "opera," my conscience is scandalized, and I *cross myself* without delay!!! What do you say to that? Don't you feel edified?

But do you know that I shall probably make another trip to Paris this year, after the mass, that is to say, towards the end of May?<sup>1</sup> Why not? Is it because you ought not to give yourself all the trouble you took last year? Who knows! Good-bye meanwhile.

Peppina sends greetings to you and your dear Maria, and I squeeze your hands most heartily. Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Wednesday  
(*A Copy.*<sup>2</sup>)

My dear Marie, for the love of God, do not send me those unhappy papers. What should I do with them? Everybody will always be in the right as against me, and I in the wrong as against everybody. One must decide accordingly. I should only succeed in having insult hurled at me, and in raising an uproar about my wretched names. Concerning Aida, here is the absolute truth. The real author of the libretto is Mariette Bey, who, having invented an Egyptian story of a certain sort, persuaded the Viceroy to have an opera made of it for the opening of the Isthmus. This story of Mariette's, a few copies of which were printed in Cairo, is in Nutter's portfolio. Because I gave him the copy which I had. The question was, to construct an opera from it. That is what I did, building up and demolishing a scenario with Verdi, then writing the *whole thing* out in French—not the scenario, but the *entire piece, bit by bit*, sentence by sentence. Verdi had the piece put in verses by Ghislanzoni, and he was so far from asserting his paternity of it that we read on the Italian playbills *Versi di Ghislanzoni*—not "poem," as is usually put there. Such is the real truth. I did this work at Busseto, whither I was called by Verdi.<sup>3</sup> All this should be verified by letters and dispatches. A dispatch to me which ought to be found, and which is curious, is the one in which I am given the choice, for Aida, between Verdi, Gounod, and Wagner! Verdi never knew of this dispatch; but I have been ill recompensed. I, who always find that everybody is right as against me, as in excusing Verdi for having taken, over and above the bargain, the rights of translation from poor Nutter!

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

<sup>1</sup>In a note of April 8 following, Verdi announces his arrival in Paris, with his wife, for the 14th.

<sup>2</sup>This copy, in a feminine hand, is that of a letter from Du Locle to his wife. Its date is unknown. Compare Du Locle's letter addressed at Rome, March 28, 1880, to the journal *L'Italia*.

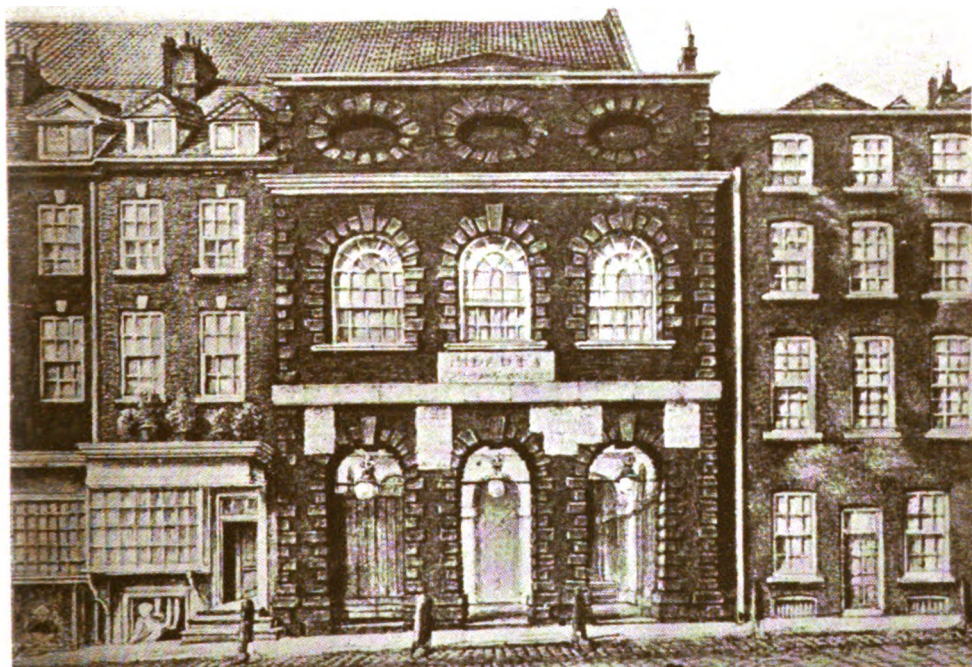
<sup>3</sup>In June, 1870, Du Locle passed some three weeks with Verdi at Busseto.

# THE EARLY YEARS OF THE FIRST ENGLISH OPERA HOUSE

By W. J. LAWRENCE

**T**HE story of the slow, laborious emersion of Italian Opera in England, of its struggles to displace the hybrid monstrosity which for over a lustrum flaunted itself in its name, this, as it has been written piecemeal by various hands, is a tangled skein before whose complexities even the keenest expert might well stand aghast. Error crept insidiously into the tale at its first telling, and subsequent historians, in striving to dislodge it, have only succeeded in rendering confusion the more confounded. When one finds an alert mind like that which was labelled "Colley Cibber" blundering over dates and circumstances well within its individual observation and experience, confidence is shaken and it is difficult to know on whom to place dependence. To-day, despite our scientific methods of attack, we are too remote from events of a painfully evanescent order to be able always to arrest their flight and so fully to restore order out of chaos. But the more difficult the task the greater its fascination for the researcher; and it may not be wholly presumptuous for a lifelong delver into both the virgin soil and the well-tilled fields of English musico-dramatic history to attempt the blazing of a trail.

Accustomed as we are to speak of that landmark of the Augustan age, the old Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, as England's first Italian Opera House, we are apt to forget that initially the term does not apply, and that in it for long opera was, in drummer's phrase, nothing more than an occasionally useful "side-line." Built in 1705 by Sir John Vanbrugh, architect by profession and dramatist by choice, the Queen's was primarily intended as habitat for the veteran tragedian, Betterton, and his associates of the little theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who had found that their bandbox of a house hopelessly handicapped them in their uphill fight with the players of Drury Lane. Each camp in its endeavour to best the enemy had already fallen back on occasion on the adventitious aid of musical spectacle; and Vanbrugh as controller of the new house clearly foresaw that the same expedient would have to be resorted to. There was no idea in the beginning of the Queen's eventually becoming a substantive opera-house, and its ultimate transmutation was due, curiously enough, to a



**View of the Front of the Old Opera House, Haymarket**

**Built by Sir John Vanbrugh**

*From an original drawing by Capon, made in 1783*



determining combination of purely fortuitous circumstance. Its defectiveness, acoustically, for the speaking voice, together with the peculiarity of its location, fitted it better for an opera-house than a theatre, and an opera-house it became. On this score, Cibber is an excellent witness. Discussing the delusive prospects of Betterton's company just as they were on the verge of entering on occupation of their new home, Colley writes, in the ninth chapter of his *Apology* (1739):

As to their other dependence, the house, they had not yet discovered, that almost every proper quality and convenience of a good theatre had been sacrificed or neglected, to show the spectator a vast triumphal piece of architecture; and that the best play, for the reasons I am going to offer, could not but be under great disadvantages, and be less capable of delighting the auditor here, than it could have been in the plain theatre they came from. For what could their vast columns, their gilded cornices, their immoderate high roofs, avail, when scarce one word in ten could be distinctly heard in it? Nor had it then the form it now stands in, which necessity, two or three years after, reduced it to. At the first opening it, the flat ceiling that is now over the orchestra was then a semi-oval arch, that sprung fifteen feet higher from above the cornice: the ceiling over the pit too was still more raised, being one level line from the highest back part of the upper gallery to the front of the stage: the front boxes were a continued semi-circle to the bare walls of the house on each side. This extraordinary and superfluous space occasioned such an undulation from the voice of every actor, that generally what they said sounded like the gabbling of so many people in the lofty aisles in the cathedral. The tone of a trumpet, or the swell of an eunuch's holding note, it is true, might be sweetened by it; but the articulate sounds of a speaking voice were drowned by the hollow reverberations of one word upon another.

To this inconvenience, why may we not add that of its situation? For at that time it had not the advantage of almost a large city which has since been built in its neighbourhood. These costly spaces of Hanover, Grosvenor, and Cavendish squares, with the many and great adjacent streets about them, were then all but so many green fields of pasture, from whence they could draw little or no sustenance, unless it were that of a milk diet. The city, the inns of court, and the middle part of the town, which were the most constant support of a theatre, and chiefly to be relied on, were now too far out of the reach of an easy walk; and coach hire is often too hard a tax upon the pit and gallery.

Some idea of the troubles that lie in wait for the conscientious operatic annalist may be gained from a full exposition of the perplexing contradictoriness of the various early authorities as to the date of the opening of the new Queen's Theatre, and the fare presented on that occasion. Downes, who wrote nearest to the event (his serviceable *Roscius Anglicanus* appearing in 1708), and who is therefore the least likely to blunder, tells us that



Betterton, finding himself unequal to the struggle, now transferred his company over to Captain Vanbrugge, to act under him at the theatre in the Haymarket, and upon April 9th, 1705, the latter opened his theatre with a foreign opera, performed by a new set of singers arrived from Italy—the worst that ever came from thence, for it lasted but five days; and they being liked but indifferently by the gentry—they in a little time marched back to their own country.

Cibber, writing thirty years after Downes, begins badly by placing the date of opening in 1706, and then goes on to say that the initial bill proffered

a translated opera, to Italian music, called *The Triumph of Love*; but this not having in it the charm of *Camilla*, either from the inequality of the music or voices, had but a cold reception, being performed but three days, and those not crowded.

Along comes Burney to add to the intricacies of the problem. According to his "General History of Music," the date was Easter Monday, April 9, 1705, when an inaugural prologue written by Garth was spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle, and the performance consisted of Dryden's tragedy of *The Indian Emperor*, together with singing by "the Italian Boy." Ashton<sup>1</sup>, in condemning Downes' and Cibber's details, seeks to confirm Burney's statement in all but the dating, and relies on the fact that the first Queen's advertisement to be found in *The Daily Courant* deals with the performance of *The Indian Emperor* on April 14, 1705. This of itself is no proof, since Vanbrugh undoubtedly placed his dependence at the outset purely on bills supplemented by the obvious attractions of a new theatre.

Finally, Michael Kelly, in the handy synopsis of early operatic records given in an appendix to the second volume of his *Reminiscences*, contributes still further to the tangle. While agreeing with Burney as to the date and the prologue, he states that the production was "Signor Giacomo Greber's *Loves of Ergasto*, set to Italian music."

Notwithstanding this extraordinary diversity of opinion, it becomes apparent on probing the matter to the bottom that the truth can be arrived at by fusing Downes' and Kelly's statements. The date of opening was certainly Easter Monday, April 9, 1705. *The Triumph of Love*, to which Cibber pins his faith, was not produced until the following July, when it was given at the deserted theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, not in the Queen's, whither Betterton and his associates had temporarily returned, but with

<sup>1</sup>*Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, 1882, II, p. 7.

indifferent success. Sir Samuel Garth undoubtedly wrote the inaugural prologue, and Congreve the dramatist (who was associated in the beginning with Vanbrugh in the management of the theatre, but retired after the first season), the epilogue. As neither address has been reprinted by any operatic annalist, and as Congreve's epilogue<sup>1</sup> helps materially to solve the problem, I reproduce both:

PROLOGUE BY SIR SAMUEL GARTH, SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE  
QUEEN'S THEATRE, HAYMARKET:

Such was our builder's art, that soon as nam'd,  
This fabrick, like the infant-world, was fram'd.  
The architect must on dull order wait,  
But 'tis the poet only can create;  
None else, at pleasure, can duration give,  
When marble fails, the Muses' structures live.  
The Cyprian fane is now no longer seen,  
Tho' sacred to the name of love's fair queen.  
Ev'n Athens scarce in pompous ruins stands,  
Tho' finished by the learn'd Minerva's hands.  
More sure presages from their walls we find,  
By beauty founded,<sup>2</sup> and by wit design'd.  
In the good age of ghostly ignorance,  
How did cathedrals rise, and zeal advance?  
The merry monks said orisons, at ease,  
Large were their meals, and light their penances;  
Pardon for sins was purchas'd with estates,  
And none but rogues in rags dy'd reprobates.  
But now that pious pageantry's no more,  
And stages thrive, as churches did before,  
Your own magnificence you here survey,  
Majestick columns stand where dunghills lay,  
And cars triumphal rise from carts of hay.  
Swains here are taught to hope, and nymphs to fear,  
And big Almanzors fight mock Blenheims here.  
Descending goddesses adorn our scenes,  
And quit their bright abodes for gilt machines.  
Shou'd Jove, for this fair circle, leave his throne,  
He'd meet a lightning fiercer than his own.  
Tho' to the sun, his tow'ring eagles rise,  
They scarce cou'd bear the lustre of these eyes.

Read side by side with Cibber's strictures on the architectural deficiencies of the house, Garth's strophes assume an ironical flavour. With relief one turns to the

<sup>1</sup>Not elsewhere to be found, I think, save in a little book entitled "Prologues and Epilogues celebrated for their Poetical Merit," published at Oxford, without date.

<sup>2</sup>Referring to the fact that the foundation stone had been laid in 1704 by the beautiful Lady Sunderland, popularly known as "the little Whig."

EPILOGUE AT THE OPENING OF THE QUEEN'S THEATRE IN THE HAYMAR-  
 KET, WITH AN ITALIAN PASTORAL. WRITTEN BY MR. CONGREVE:

Whatever future fate our house may find,  
 At present we expect you shou'd be kind:  
 Inconstancy itself can claim no right,  
 Before enjoyment and the wedding night.  
 You must be fix'd a little ere you range,  
 You must be true till you have time to change.  
 A week at least; one night is sure too soon:  
 But we pretend not to a honeymoon.  
 To novelty we know you can be true,  
 But what alas! or who, is always new?  
*This day, without presumption, we pretend*  
*With novelty entire you're entertain'd;*  
*For not alone our House and Scenes are new,*  
*Our Song and Dance, but ev'n our Actors too.*  
 Our Play itself has something in't uncommon,  
 Two faithful lovers, and one constant woman.  
 In sweet Italian strains our Shepherds sing,  
 Of harmless loves our painted forests ring,  
 In notes, perhaps less foreign than the thing.  
 To sound and shew at first we make pretence,  
 In time we may regale you with some sense,  
 But that at present were too great expence.  
 We only for the beaux may think it hard,  
 To be to-night from smutty jests debarr'd:  
 But in good breeding, sure, they'll once excuse  
 Ev'n modesty, when in a stranger muse.  
 The day's at hand when we shall shift the scene,  
 And to yourselves shew your dear selves again.  
 Paint the reverse of what you've seen to-day,  
 And in bold strokes the vicious town display.

Not only the heading of the epilogue, but the lines specially italicised, as well as much of what follows, negatives the possibility that the Queen's could have opened with *The Indian Emperor* or any other old play. Congreve's reference to "two faithful lovers, and one constant woman" established the accuracy of Michael Kelly's statement, for these are characteristics of the plot of *The Loves of Ergaste*, an Indian pastoral printed in 1705 alternately in Italian and English<sup>1</sup> (undoubtedly for sale in the theatre), as "represented at the opening of the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket" and as "compos'd by Signior Giacomo Greber."

<sup>1</sup>Burney says the date of the production of this pastoral was April 24, 1705, when the character of the nymph, Licori, was sustained by "the Italian Boy" and the bill also comprised a new farce called *The Consultation*. But since the anonymous Italian youngster had sung separately on the 14th previously, he might have suspected that the pastoral, or at any rate some sort of exotic musical production, had been given earlier.

Greber, it may be noted, was a German musician who came to London in 1692, bringing with him the celebrated Francesca Margherita de l'Epine, the first Italian vocalist of any distinction who sang in England.

All this sifting of evidence has been distinctly worth while, as the upshot brings us face to face with a remarkable fact. It was in keeping with the eternal fitness of things that the future home of Italian Opera should open with a pastoral piece sung entirely in Italian by Italian artists. That such homogeneity was not to be experienced there again until the production of *Almahide* in January, 1710, was due to a question of ways and means. Vanbrugh's initial experience had shown that the cognoscenti were not to be fobbed by an association of mediocre singers, and the difficulty and expense of bringing a first-class combination from Italy proved for long an insurmountable barrier. Nothing better than an ugly compromise could be effected. The attractions of a male soprano of the first or second order were eked out by the more or less competent singing of home-born artists, many of whom were incapable of dealing with any language save their own. Hence that arid lustrum in which, in the well-known words of Colley Cibber, Italian Opera masqueraded

in as rude a disguise, and unlike itself, as possible; in a lame, hobbling translation into our own language, with false quantities, or metre out of measure to its original notes, sung by our own unskilful voices, with graces misapplied to almost every sentiment, and with action lifeless and unmeaning through every character.

The bad impression made at the beginning by a foreign troupe of incompetents was consolidated immediately afterwards when Betterton's players came to act at the new house and its acoustic defects became fully apparent. It was a case of give a dog a bad name and hang him. Patronage proved lukewarm, and a painfully dull season ended in June.

Just here I may say that questions of space preclude the possibility of my dealing with the theatrical records of the Queen's save in a superficial, glancing way. But it will remain for the ultimate historian of Italian Opera in England to assemble both the musical and the dramatic annals in order that the sense of proportion may be attained.<sup>1</sup>

With the reopening of the Queen's on October 30, 1705, Vanbrugh's excellent new comedy, *The Confederacy*, saw the light.

<sup>1</sup>See Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration to 1830*, Vol. II, for satisfactory summaries of the theatrical seasons at the Queen's.

It was given ten times, but not to the overflowing houses its merits demanded. Three other new plays followed in quick succession, and on February 21, 1706, there was a notable production of Lord Lansdowne's tragedy with florid musical embellishment, *The British Enchanters*, or *No Magic like Love*, a reversion to the Post-Restoration type of English dramatic opera, which met with considerable success and was afterwards revived in reduced and more strictly operatic form. Next in order came, on March 7, Motteux's pastoral opera, *The Temple of Love*, a translation from the Italian sung to music by Saggione. Unless a later addition, the following allusions in the epilogue seem an "intelligent anticipation" of the Drury Lane production of Marc Antonio Bononcini's *Camilla*, which did not materialise until the penultimate date of the month:

Get some fam'd Opera, any how translated,  
No matter, so the t'other House don't get it.  
Get clothes, tho' the Actors with half-pay dispense;  
Get whims, get anything . . . . . but Sense.

It is noteworthy that Owen McSwiney, the Drury Lane manager's factotum, who had translated the libretto of *Camilla* from the Italian of Silvio Stampiglia, was soon to be identified with the fortunes of the Queen's Theatre.<sup>1</sup> The production itself was remarkable for two circumstances, first for the appearance of Signor Valentini (Valentini Urbani), earliest in order of the male sopranis, a singer of the second rank, with a weak but melodious voice; and again for establishing the absurd system of bilingual interpretation which, despite the girdings of the wits, so long obtained. Other countries, however, for similar economic reasons, had been compelled to resort to the same expedient. If Riccoboni is to be believed, when Italian opera was first produced in Hamburg, the recitative was given in the home tongue, whilst the airs were sung in Italian.

By way of countering the attractions of *Camilla* at Drury Lane, Vanbrugh, on April 5, brought out Tom D'Urfey's fantastic comic opera, *Wonders in the Sun*, or *The Kingdom of Birds*, which may be pithily described as a Jules Verne tale with a spice of Rostand's *Chantecleer*. Barring an air by Eccles, the music was all old, compiled from a variety of sources, even Lully being laid under contribution. According to Whincop "it had several ballads in it that took very much with the common

<sup>1</sup>For details of McSwiney's adventurous career, see my article, "A Famous Wexford Man," in *The New Ireland Review* for August, 1908.

people," but although given five or six times, it was not successful enough to establish the vogue of ballad opera. The necessary impulse for the creation of that long-popular genre was lacking until Gay's satiric genius afforded it in *The Beggar's Opera*.

At the close of his second season, Vanbrugh, disappointed in his expectations and wearied with the cares of management, leased the Queen's to Owen McSwiney at a rental of £5 per acting day, the total sum not to exceed £700. To this arrangement Christopher Rich, the astute Drury Lane Manager, made no objection, feeling assured that his old lieutenant, who was heavily in his debt, would remain subservient, and that the upshot would be his own control of both houses. Hoping to hoodwink both players and public, he secretly agreed to the enticing away by McSwiney of the principal members of his company, only to find when the manœuvre had been effected that his quondam satellite had played him false and intended fighting for his own hand. Thenceforth between the two it was war to the knife.

Opening the Queen's on October 15, 1706, with the Drury Lane players, McSwiney was for a time too hampered by lack of means to compete with Rich on operatic lines. All the signs of the hour gave delusive indications that Drury Lane, and not the Haymarket house, was to be the future home of Italian Opera. The vogue there of the hybrid makeshift was trenchantly girded at in Addison's prologue to Smith's tragedy, *Phædra and Hippolytus*, as brought out by McSwiney on April 21, 1707. Doubtless some impetus to the rage for the exotic had been given by the performance at court of *Camilla*, in celebration of the Queen's birthday, a couple of months previously. Anne never condescended to visit the playhouses, and, since Mahomet refused to go to the mountain, the mountain at long last had to be brought to Mahomet. Forced by the defection of his players to make strenuous appeal to his patrons' musical instincts, Rich brought out Motteux's *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*, one of several futile attempts made about this time to establish a piratical school of English grand opera, based on Italian groundwork.<sup>1</sup> McSwiney could only respond by producing a new play or two, and, after missing fire with Mrs. Centlivre's *Platonic Lady*, scored a remarkably happy hit with Farquhar's fine comedy, *The Beaux' Stratagem*.

Precisely at this juncture Fate willed it that an exchange of weapons should take place. A certain Colonel Brett, having become possessed of an interest in the Drury Lane patent, forced

<sup>1</sup>For the characteristics of this pasticcio, see O. G. Sonneck, *Catalogue of Opera Librettos printed before 1800*, p. 1072.

himself resolutely into partnership with the scheming Rich, and seriously disturbed the equanimity of that despot by treating the players as creatures of flesh and blood. Not only that, but having arrived at the conclusion that two playhouses were in excess of the requirements, Brett petitioned the Lord Chamberlain to enforce an amalgamation of the rival companies. The result was that the players were one and all commanded to betake themselves to Drury Lane, McSwiney, as a solatium, being awarded a monopoly of Italian opera at his house from January, 1708. As will shortly be seen, however, this attempt to establish a regular Italian Opera House, important as was the outcome, proved abortive.

In his new rôle of impresario (the first time anybody had ever sustained it in England), McSwiney reopened the Queen's on January 14, 1708, and proceeded to give operatic performances twice a week by subscription. Then, and for some time afterwards, no more than 400 tickets were issued for the fashionable parts of the house, the pit and boxes, which were both at the one price, but McSwiney's custom of asking for subscriptions for the first six nights of each new opera was afterwards abandoned in favour of subscriptions for the entire season. Prices ruled high, and opera-going was a luxury that only the rich could afford. At best, McSwiney could do little more than mark time while elaborate preparations were being made for his Italian opera campaign, and the season which ended on May 28,<sup>1</sup> yielded but little novelty. No particular attraction was proffered until the end of February, when Motteux's pastoral opera in three acts, *Love's Triumph*, translated from the "book" of Cardinal Ottoboni, and sung to music by Carlo Cesarini Giovanni, *detto del Violone*, and Francesco Gasparini, was given eight times. Only about a fifth of the opera was sung in the original Italian. Motteux was an indifferent writer of lyrics, and his libretti were strewn with most of the absurdities so lucidly animadverted upon by Addison in the 18th *Spectator*. It is noteworthy that Valentini, who made his first appearance at the Queen's in this production, had arranged all the choruses with dance accompaniments, after the French manner, the idea being to see whether British liking leaned to the French or the Italian style. For his work he was given a benefit on the last night of the opera.

<sup>1</sup>About which time we find Vanbrugh writing to Lord Manchester, "I have parted with my whole concern (the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket) to Mr. Swiney, only reserving my rent, so he is entire possessor of the Opera, and most people think will manage it better than anybody. He has a good deal of money in his pocket, that he got before by the acting company, and is willing to venture it upon the singers."

McSwiney now demonstrated his enterprise by bringing over the first great Italian star to set foot on English shores. This was the celebrated Cavaliere Nicolino Grimaldi, professionally known as Nicolini, a Neapolitan castrate, whose reputation was already so assured that no foreign triumph could add to its lustre. Salaries in Italy were not then of any particular munificence, and itinerating singers had not yet grown exorbitant in their demands. Consequently Nicolini closed with McSwiney's offer of 800 guineas for the season, a sum little better than half what was afterwards paid to artists in nowise his superiors. His delicious soprano voice, which changed later to contralto, was then in the heyday of its charm. Cibber, much as he disliked foreign opera and its exponents, had perforce to yield to the Neapolitan an extorted admiration:

Whatever praises may have been given to the most famous voices that have been heard since Nicolini, upon the whole I cannot but come into the opinion that still prevails among several persons of condition, who are able to give a reason for their liking, that no singer since his time has so justly and gracefully acquitted himself in whatever character he appeared, as Nicolini. At most the difference between him and the greatest favourite of the ladies, Farinelli, amounted but to this, that he might sometimes more exquisitely surprise us; but Nicolini (by pleasing the eye as well as the ear) filled us with a more various and rational delight.

Steele, who, as press agent to the Drury Lane players, was little disposed to do the foreign singer justice, unites with Cibber in his admiration of Nicolini. Writing in the 113th *Tatler*, he says:

For my own part, I was fully satisfied with the sight of an actor, who, by the grace and propriety of his action and gesture, does honour to the human figure. Every one will imagine, I mean Signor Nicolini, who sets off the character he bears in opera by his action, as much as he does the words of it by his voice. Every limb and every finger contributes to the part he acts, inasmuch that a deaf man may go along with him in the sense of it. There is scarce a beautiful posture in an old statue which he does not plant himself in, as the different circumstances of the story give occasion for it. He performs the most ordinary action in a manner suitable to the greatness of his character, and shows the prince even in the giving of a letter, or despatching of a messenger.

Nicolini made his English début on December 14, 1708, when McSwiney reopened the Queen's with his own version of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, "a noble entertainment" (in Steele's phrase), translated from the "book" of Adriano Morselli, and sung, partly in Italian and partly in English, to the combined scores of Alessandro Scarlatti and Nicolo Francesco Haym. The latter composer, who was then resident in London, contributed a new



overture and about twenty arias.<sup>1</sup> As Italian-singing coöperators, Nicolini had Valentini, now deposed from his pride of place, but still popular, Margherita de l'Epine, an old favourite, and the mysterious German lady known as "the Baroness," who after acquiring her art in Italy, had come to England in 1706. The chief singers in English were Mr. Cook, Mr. Ramondon, and the beautiful Mrs. Tofts, then on the verge of her retirement. No such combination of lyrico-dramatic talent had ever been seen before, and it is not surprising that what with the compelling genius of Nicolini and the simple beauty of the arias, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* proved a great success. Later on, there was a revival of the perennial *Camilla*, followed by the production of another new opera, *Clotilda*, and a remarkably prosperous season ended on May 20, 1709.

Every student of the story of the rise of opera in Italy knows how insistent there were the claims of spectacle, and with what alacrity they were responded to. Probably because scenic excesses of the sort in association with Post-Restoration dramatic opera of the type of *The Fairy Queen* had occasioned severe, well-remembered losses, managers were long loath to expend much money on the pictorial embellishment of its imported successor. Records are ominously silent upon the point until May, 1709, when a paragraph cropped up in the papers saying that "a new set of scenes painted by two famous Italian artists lately arrived from Venice" had been added to the Queen's theatre stock. Apart from the question of expense, there was another reason why elaborate scenery was for long eschewed. The end-of-the-century theatre practice of allowing certain well-mulcted spectators to sit on the stage and lounge about behind the scenes had spread itself to the opera, where the "buzzing mosquitos," as Cibber called them, occupied enclosures ranged along the wings in a manner indicated in Hogarth's picture of *The Beggar's Opera*. It is noteworthy in this connexion that when the four Iroquois Chiefs who visited England in April, 1710, were taken to the Queen's to see *Macbeth*, they were given seats on the stage so that the expectant audience might have full value for their money. The practice finally proved so offensive to singers and spectators alike that it was specially prohibited at the Opera by an order of George I, issued in December, 1729.

No sooner was Owen McSwiney on the crest of the wave than along came fell circumstance to throw him again into troubled

<sup>1</sup>For him, see *The Spectator*, No. 258. He was an accomplished man of letters and wrote a *History of Music*.

waters. Wearied out by the purposeful intriguing of his wily co-patentee, Colonel Brett threw up the sponge and retired in high dudgeon from Drury Lane. Once more monarch of all he surveyed, Rich resumed his tyranny over the players, who, tortured beyond all endurance, made clamant appeal to the Lord Chamberlain. The result was that the standing theatrical order was annulled, leaving the players free to go whithersoever they pleased.

Without loss of a moment, Wilks, Dogget, Cibber and Mrs. Oldfield entered into an agreement with McSwiney whereby the whole five became joint managers and sharers in the Haymarket house, which was now to be run partly as a theatre and partly as an opera house; and this once concluded they set about altering the building with the view of remedying its defective acoustics. In the multitude of counsellors there is not always wisdom, Holy Writ to the contrary notwithstanding, and on opening the Queen's in September, 1709, the new syndicate showed its exquisite bad taste by sandwiching acrobatic feats between the acts of *Othello*. It was hardly to be expected that a governing board on which there was a plurality of players, and which had evinced so little reverence for Shakespeare, would be considerate in its attitude towards the foreign singers; and it is not surprising to find that there was considerable friction during the season. In January, 1710, came the first operatic production of note, the *Almahide* of Bononcini, sung entirely in Italian by Nicolini, Valentini, Cassani, Margherita de l'Epine, and Signora Isabella, otherwise Isabella Girardeau. Fearing unnecessarily that the public would weary of the exclusively foreign feast of showy, over-pretentious music, the management sought to temper the severities by giving vocal intermezzi, sung in English between the acts by Dogget, Mrs. Lindsay and Mrs. Cross. Notwithstanding the artistic offensiveness of this mélange, the opera bore fourteen repetitions, and by its success was instrumental in sweeping away the old mongrel type of performance. Writing a year later, Addison pretended that the public had grown tired "of understanding half the opera, and therefore to ease themselves entirely if the fatigue of thinking, have so order'd it at present that the whole opera is performed in an unknown tongue." But that was only Fanny's pretty way.

Of the precise nature of the friction between the controllers of the Queen's and the Italian singers we should know nothing were it not for the lucky preservation in the collection of Mr. Harrison Garside of Victoria, B. C., of an interesting handbill,

which, as it is now the oldest thing of the kind extant, we reproduce below. It reads as follows:

## ADVERTISEMENT

Friday, March the 17th, 170<sup>th</sup>

It has been publish'd in yesterday's *Daily Courant*, and last night in her Majesty's Theatre at the Haymarket, that to Morrow (being Saturday the 18th of March) will be presented there, a comedy, with several select scenes of Musick, to be perform'd between the Acts by Cavalier Nicolini, Signior Valentini, and Signiora Margarita; which sort of performance the said Cavalier Nicolini finding to be directly contrary to the Agreement made between him and Mr. Owen Swiny<sup>1</sup>, and that the same wou'd prove a real means to vilifie and prejudice the Opera. He doth hereby acquaint all Gentlemen and Ladies, that his intention is strictly to observe the tenour and meaning of the said agreement, that is to say, to sing during the winter season only formal operas, and to be always ready to please and serve them according to his duty and usual custom.

Clearly, if the Haymarket players had no sense of the dignity of *their* art, Nicolini had a deep sense of the dignity of his!

On May 23 following came a noteworthy production of the *Hydaspes* of Francesco Mancini, in which Nicolini and his Italian associates had the coöperation of a capable English tenor singer named Lawrence, who was accomplished enough to be able to render their tongue. The curious will find an analysis of this romantic Persian opera (so amusingly satirised by Addison in the 13th *Spectator*), in Hogarth's *Memoirs of the Musical Drama*. Nicolini's fight with the property lion must have been a sight for gods and men.

Meanwhile there was much troubling of the waters at old Drury, where the turmoil was again to affect the fortunes of the rival house. On June 7, 1709, just as McSwiney had signed articles with the deserters, the Lord Chamberlain issued a mandate forbidding Rich to give further performances. Among the owners of Drury Lane at that period was one William Collier, a popular member of Parliament and *persona grata* in court circles. Exerting his influence, Collier gained permission in the following November to reopen the theatre under his own control, the understanding being that neither Rich nor any of his satellites were to have any further say in the management. Acting on this, Collier forcibly ejected Rich, who was living on the premises, and, with what players he could secure—mostly second-rate—

<sup>1</sup>In deference to English susceptibilities (Irish patronymics being viewed with distaste), McSwiney had for some time dropped the "Mac" before his name, but he replaced it later.





From a source given by Mr. H. H. H. H.



From a source given by Mr. H. H. H. H.

proceeded to open the house. His failure was a foregone conclusion, as it was not to be expected that an inexperienced manager with an inefficient company could compete with the strong and manifold attractions of the Queen's. Baffled in his schemes, he once more appealed to the Lord Chamberlain, and succeeded in effecting a very silly exchange. McSwiney and his joint sharers were peremptorily ordered to remove to Drury Lane, where they were to have the sole right to represent plays, and Collier was given a monopoly of opera at the Queen's. Allied with this was the curious understanding that whenever opera was given at the Haymarket house on Wednesdays, Drury Lane was to remain closed.

Collier, immediately on gaining possession of the Queen's, let the house to Aaron Hill, the dramatist, at a rental of £600 per annum, and the season opened on November 22, 1710, with a revival of *Hydaspes*. In the brief period he was at the helm, Hill proved himself an impresario of initiative and resource, and contrived to leave an indelible mark on the annals of early Italian Opera. He was the first to appreciate the potentialities of Handel (then languishing in obscurity in London), and to demonstrate that to procure good opera it was unnecessary to go the whole way to Italy. After thoroughly maturing his plans, he set about writing a libretto based on Tasso's *Gierusalemme*, and on its completion, handed it over to Giacomo Rossi to be translated into Italian. That was done, and the "book" given to Handel, who took his duties so lightly (there was no elaborate orchestration to worry over!) that the music was written in a fortnight. The result was *Rinaldo*, brought out with triumphant success on February 24, 1711. Whincop tells us that the maestro "then made his first appearance in England, and accompanied the voices himself on the harpsichord in the orchestre, and performed his part in the overture, wherein his execution seemed as astonishing as his genius." Thanks to the absorbing romantic interest of the theme, the beauty of the music and the splendour of the spectacle, *Rinaldo* was given uninterruptedly to crowded houses until the close of the season. In the judgment of many connoisseurs, Handel's first opera remains his best. Certainly a work which contained those delightful arias, "Cara Sposa" and "Lascia ch'io pianga" must be for ever memorable.

With the sacred name of Handel one must bring this proem to a close. It only remains to add that with the performance of Motteux's comedy, *Love's a Jest*, on August 31, 1711, the players took their farewell of the Queen's, and that thenceforth the theatre became a permanent opera-house.

## SOMETHING "BIGGER" THAN THE BETHLEHEM BACH FESTIVALS

By CHARLES D. ISAACSON

**I**T is over half a year since I made a pilgrimage to the city of Bethlehem, and sat at the feet of old Bach. Ever since, the festival has been alive in my memory. And yet something "bigger" than the event has been arousing the propagandist in me. What is being done in Bethlehem by the citizens of the town, by Dr. Wolle, the conductor, by Charles H. Schwab, the millionaire patron, by the university officials, by the musicians—wonderful as it is, inspiring as it is, artistic and beautiful as it is—is made pygmy by the something "bigger" which it suggests to my mind for action.

\* \* \*

Every year Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, holds its now famous cycle of Bach classics. The choir and organist are assisted by well-known singers and an orchestra that are imported. Doctor J. Fred Wolle conducts. Some of the wealthy people underwrite the expenses. The large hall is packed to standing-room for every session, and out on the lawn thousands listen without charge. Indoors the audience consists of pilgrims from all over the States. The performance is excellent. The metropolitan newspapers carry a stick or so about the music.

"Very beautiful, very beautiful," say the visitors, and they go home and maybe they come again, and maybe they do not. All of the facts mentioned are, in a way, very ordinary. The Bach Festival, viewed purely as a musical function, deserves little more attention or comment than any other big musical event at Carnegie Hall or Symphony Hall or the Chicago Auditorium.

As performers of Bach, the Bethlehem musicians are gifted and inspired. True, but so are the Vatican choristers, so are the Metropolitan Opera choristers, so are all the orchestras, ensembles, organists, conductors; and many another festival chorus, small or large, manifests the same degree of unselfish devotion to the cause of good music.

What, then, lifts the Bach festivals at Bethlehem far out of the ordinary and what is it that makes them suggest something still greater, something "bigger"?

Here is a community's pride. Here is a development which is ingrained in the social life of the residents. It is the daily gossip and romance of the citizens. It is as much a part of the household cares and routine as the winter preserves and the summer crops and the daily business. It is the pet of the whole population, not of a selected sect or set. The storekeepers are as much in the game as the trombone choir. The school-teachers are no more intimate with the details than the bell-boy at the hotel. Nearly every family has at least one representative in the chorus or the trombone choir, or among the reception committee or the ushers or the publicity men. It is the regret of one's life to be without a relative in the Festival. But worse than claiming no relative in the music would be the disappointment of the villager in permitting a Festival to pass without being present for a session or more. During the Festival the discussion everywhere is about the music, the visitors, "the greatest annual we ever had." For weeks afterward, the event remains the most important topic of conversation, giving place finally to just one other matter more serious—the next Festival!

As I write these words, I have before me the record of a conversation heard in a Bethlehem grocery store. The proprietor was engaged in quite a heated argument over the particular Bach chorale which he believed should surely be included next June! The customer was willing to bet that the grocer was wrong, that Dr. Wollé would never think of including it; the customer was in favor of a totally different chorale, one of the later masterpieces.

What does this mean? What is the real significance of the incident? Year in and year out ordinary every-day folks of all types and conditions, rich and poor and healthy and strong, chatter about the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Paradox of paradoxes! It is as though one were to say that the baseball teams of the National Baseball League were leaders in a movement to spread Socrates! That the subway crews of New York were heart and soul in a plan to raise a monument to Dante. That the longshoremen of Hoboken were madly in love with the ninety teachings of Confucius!

When many musicians themselves still inwardly shudder at Bach and put him on their recital programs because it is the tradition to open with something cold and academic; when many musicians still consider Bach an antiquated, unsympathetic,



lifeless composer—what should be expected of the people? The paradox grows as Bethlehem's marvel spreads on the canvas.

Yet there is nothing extraordinary about the people of Bethlehem. They are not martyrs, saints or intellectual paragons. In fact, they are very ordinary. Bethlehem is a manufacturing town. Among other things, the encyclopedia-authority says:

Bethlehem: a borough of Northampton and Lehigh Counties on North bank of Lehigh River. Population (1910), 12,837. . . .

During the war of the Independence, part of its well-known Moravian seminary was used as a general hospital of the continental army. . . . Among the borough's industrial establishments the manufactories of iron and steel are the most important, but it also manufactures brass, zinc, and silk and knit goods. The municipality owns and operates its own waterworks. . . .

Bethlehem has often been called the American Bayreuth. . . .

The paradox grows, indeed, as the consideration of Bethlehem's love of Bach appears to be the supreme interest in the communal life of the town.

The father of modern music, the head of our musical family tree, the popular idol of a thriving, rushing, bustling commercial American city! The cantor of Leipzig, the patron saint of a population of common business people and professional families!

\* \*  
\*

It was a soft, balmy day in late May when we arrived in Bethlehem. The town is situated in the heart of the beautiful Pennsylvania country. The roads are well kept, the houses are spick-and-span. The river runs through the center of the town, separating the factory section from the homes. The chimney spires rise like sky-giants, belching forth smoke in clouds such as precede a thunder-storm. The steel works spread and sprawl over hundreds of acres, reaching down to the waterfront and stretching to the outskirts. A massive span-bridge colors the commercial aspect of the picture. Bright, modern stores show alluring windows to the passer-by; hundreds of automobiles give a metropolitan touch to the scene; smart street-cars, with smart conductors and motormen, are crowded all the time; in the mornings, earlier than seven o'clock, girls and men are rushing to their jobs; in the evening the city is as lively as New York. The lights twinkle, the place is busy and wide-awake.

A very modern city. A very business-like city.

On the other side of the river are the homes and the other stores, and the hills and Lehigh University. There is much

open space and a beautiful view of the country. There are some old land-marks—the Moravian settlement, the Moravian seminary, the chapel, the remains of colonial days and revolutionary days, and early American days. The guide shows the spinet which entertained George Washington and Benjamin Franklin and James Madison; she points out the pulpit where the early Moravian ministers preached, and the very spot where the missionaries addressed the Indians.

This, the guide insists, is the place where the Indians were halted one Thanksgiving night as they were about to massacre the population—halted by the sound of music in the chapel, halted by the belief that it was the Great Spirit murmuring his protection to the white folk. Further, the guide leads to where the Revolutionary soldiers were nursed, and where the little Colonial ladies were taught to read and sing.

A very historical city—a very quiet, studious city.

But the people? They talk about selling their goods as anybody else does. They dress the same. They *are* the same. It is beyond contradiction that there is nothing about Bethlehem and its people which makes for a different set of conditions from those which apply elsewhere. Bethlehem is a regular American city.

The only outstanding characteristic is the musical idea. And that is inbred by years of training. If in the earlier days the Oberammergau Passion Play had been introduced, *it*, instead, would be the big idea, except that naturally other religions would be excluded; if the scheme of performing Shakespeare's plays had been proposed and followed, *that* would be the driving motive, except that fewer could participate, because a limited number could understand and feel the message. If it had been the custom to hold Grecian dancing pageants, *that* would be the town's hobby, except that dancing is not as uplifting and could never have been so fundamental in its appeal as Bach.

When the visitors went to the Packer Memorial Church to hear the performance, they found the lawns covered with thousands of villagers, who sat on the grass under the great shade trees. Townspeople stood eagerly peering into the edifice. They held scores of the Bach Chorale and were poring over the notes and the words. The chorus of katy-dids and crickets gave a character to the stilly atmosphere—for the people were silent as they waited. The visitors entered the high-roofed church. In the darkish twilight of the chapel every seat was occupied. At the front, under the altar and in a white light that streamed through the side windows, was the chorus. They were banked

against the pipes of the majestic organ with the golden tongues. The women in white, the men behind them—several hundred singers. An orchestra was in the front, and the soloists sat with folded hands.

This is the interesting thing about the chorus, these highly trained students of Bach: The personnel reads something like this: housewife, housewife, saleslady, manager's wife, steel-worker, housewife, clerk, etc., etc. There are the workers, the daughters and wives of the workers. There are the foremen, the managers, there are the millionaires in the chorus. There are the pupils and teachers from the university. Nearly every family of Bethlehem is represented.

At the moment of three o'clock, the director comes to his place and lifts his hands. The music starts, ever so faintly, but increases and increases to a burst of sound so tremendous that it is awe-inspiring. Sopranos and tenors and basses and altos blend marvelously. One is lifted completely out of one's self, and carried into the upper regions of rarified ideals.

The man Wollé, the director, is a fine figure of a man. He has a genial smile and he loves his work. He is Bach's disciple in America. He is everybody's friend, from the wealthiest patron to the lowliest clerk in town.

This is not a review of the music. The dailies have carried the criticisms and will carry the criticisms of the next Festival. There exists an excellent summary of the entire history of the movement, as told in Raymond Walters' book. This volume reviews the development of Bethlehem's music from the earliest days, shows how the expenses have been underwritten and gives intimate pictures of the workers. As a guide to other community workers who would attempt to follow suit, a perusal of Mr. Walters' book will prove invaluable.

My endeavor here is to find the meaning of the work; to point out the principles which underlie the activities, and the something "bigger" which is in the movement, which can be transplanted anywhere. Bethlehem has proved that music can be made a genuine civic enterprise; not the sort of namby-pamby enterprise indulged in by some cities; not the sort of activity of a "Civic Music Association," which is just the high-flown name of a clique; not the political treadmill of some new-fangled mayors. Bethlehem has demonstrated that there is something in music capable of dominating the collective mind of a community, and providing a vehicle that can be universally popular.

One who would go about making another Bethlehem might safely follow the example of the Pennsylvania town. He may

enter the task with the assurance that an experiment is under way which is not contrary to human nature and American constitutionality. The mouths of the teachers of pessimism are stilled by Bethlehem. Whenever another gentleman remarks on the futility of extending the circle of musicians, let him talk on and then quietly whisper in his ear, "Go to Bethlehem." He will quote arguments beyond measure on American taste, and its failure to respond to good music. He will state the number of hundred million sheets of rag-time compositions which are sold every year. He will compare the vaudeville audiences with the concert audiences. He will tell you that artists cannot get their pay out of a début recital. He will say that Shakespeare and Rostand and Dunsany and Ibsen go unheralded and unsung, while George M. Cohan, Al Woods and Irving Berlin are knighted and crowned with laurel. He will point to the newspapers and show the front page headlines on murders, rape and bigamy; the full page rhetoric on base-ball, foot-ball and indoor hockey; the columns devoted to the epics of how to keep the menus in order and how to beautify the fading complexion and how to keep your sweetheart's love torrid—and then with malicious glare he will exhibit a bare three inches on last night's musical events. The gentleman with the pessimistic trend will tell you how the operatic society died and how the Philadelphia orchestra came near bankruptcy and how the poor young singer goes through the tortures of the inferno to reach a goal situated about Fortieth Street and Broadway, New York City.

All of this he will tell me, and I will shake my head up and down, which is the affirmative, and tell him that he is right as far as he goes, but that he stops too soon. And that he had better take a trip as far as Bethlehem, the new Jerusalem of music, at once!

Generalizing is the curse of all logic. To generalize on music from now until doomsday will lead nowhere. But when one "gets down to brass tacks," then results develop. Generalize about newspapers: it is true that newspapers are not fair to music. But particularize, make a campaign of common sense and perseverance to win over a newspaper, and then watch for results. To illustrate the point, I may be pardoned if I quote the particular case where it fell to my lot to break down the conventional generalization concerning newspapers, and in the hardest city in the world. In New York City, the *Globe* is to-day devoting more space to music than to any other feature, outside of sports. It is not uncommon for musical events to gravitate to the first page. More

especially, the *Globe* has fostered musical education and has sponsored free concerts to spread musical propaganda throughout New York. By July, 1920, over twelve hundred concerts will have been given free to the people; and the total population reached in this manner will have topped the two million mark.

Generalize about singers; but it would be easy to list here dozens and dozens of young artists who have won high places with no more difficulty than a similar number of young people in any other walk of life would have encountered to get as far.

Generalize about operatic societies that flounder on the rocks. Of course there must be efficient management. Where is a better example to offer in a particularizing way than the "Society of American Singers?" These artists, under the direction of William Wade Hinshaw, have combatted every tradition. They are singing opera in English (you could never make a success of this, one tradition has it). They are singing grand opera and light opera (you can never do both schools together, runs another tradition). They are singing with only American artists (the public won't go to a company which doesn't offer foreigners as bait, runs still another tradition). They are making an extended run of over thirty weeks (a long season can never be launched, goes the last tradition).

To return to Bethlehem, here is the example *par excellence* in particularizing, an example which should be both a flaunt at traditions, and an impetus to dreamers and idealists. If the musician is going to put up his armor and spear because he is afraid, then he will never be music's champion in the new world. But if his spirit is high, if his aims are mighty, if his ambition is undaunted, he may immediately get ready to be the maker of a new Bethlehem. But beware of confusing the community chorus plan with the Bethlehem plan!

How did Bethlehem become the center of such an intense musical interest? By years of endeavor?—Yes! By universality of appeal?—Undoubtedly! By massing of professions and businesses?—Precisely! By publicity?—Bravo, by publicity indeed!

Some of Bethlehem's own leaders will combat me in declaring the possibilities of extending the idea. They will insist that Bethlehem's musical history is an old one—that it has been developing since pre-Revolutionary days. That is true. But the handicap is not difficult to overcome. There can be quicker progress, because it is not necessary now to go over all the ground which was covered in the evolutionary progress of the Bethlehem enterprise. Conditions are different. Interest in music is greater

and more widespread. It is my personal feeling, based on five years of propaganda with the New York *Globe's* activities, that it would take a very short time to make a noticeable impression on any community. Let us suppose that an ambitious set of individuals were determined to make the town of San Antonio, Texas, the musical city of the South. Within one year, the thing would begin to take root, and show results. Within five years, it could be made the talk of the country; within a generation it would be as much a civic entity as that of Bethlehem.

Universality of appeal! What has so universal a message as music? Surely no sport, no commercial drive, no educational scheme, has such a grip on a community. Try to mass a town on any idea; not a single one can be found which has so general a pull on every kind of citizen as that of a music-festival. There is no taint of gain—it is an art-project. There is something uplifting and yet not sanctimonious. If the project were the control of a market, it would gain some business men and lose the women. If the project were the development of a monument or a park, what would be the inner joy to the participants?

Publicity! Is it not easy to understand the peculiar psychological effect on every Bethlehemite, of the publicity which the project brings to the town? Bethlehem advanced in public attention when the festivals attained to national prominence. Outsiders turned their eyes upon the spot on the map, and made the journey. The post-office felt the larger mail. The residents found their friends on the outside "looking up" to them. The local newspaper discovered a project around which it could write eternally and furnish outside newspapers with matter to clip—with credit! It takes no stretch of the imagination to realize that residents, especially shop-keepers, felt the necessity of sprucing up and getting in shape so that these visitors would not find the local minds wanting!

Thus develop local pride, local unity, intelligence. Not for one moment would I try to create the impression that every Bethlehemite has become a musician and an expert on Bach. Oh, no! But I do believe that there is not a single Bethlehemite who is not now acquainted with Bach and chorales and good music.

Dr. Wolle, the director of it all, is a keen student of humanity. He chose Bach, if not consciously, then by inspiration, because Bach is a vessel which cannot be emptied. Being so inexhaustible, the singers cannot encompass the wisdom of Bach in a moment. They can never find the last of Bach values! At first they can

only get a taste of the beauty—then the beauty grows on them; and the first taste of wisdom is had. Then the wisdom grows on them, and the infinite goodness and religious fervor dawns on them. Then these grow on the singers, and the inspiration is tasted, and so forth. Why worship a man who is less than a god? This is why Bach has proven such an ideal choice for Bethlehem—and why Bach will always be the saint of Bethlehem. Bach is not dry, or academic—again tradition is dealt a death-blow. Bach is supremely human, supremely beautiful. He was a man who suffered, he was a man who loved, he was a home-man, a father, a husband, a gardener, a hater of tyrants, a lover of friends. A man with enemies, a man who came from a family of artists, but who made his own art, who conceived his own schools, a man of simplicity of taste and catholicity of appreciation. One who lived in the country and visited in the city, who adored the church-loft, and knew the joy of the organ. He could wash the dishes at night, and go then to his scores, and pat his wife on the head between bars, writing never to go back; suffering because of pigmy rivals who stood in his way and barked at him; and dying, as he lived, alone with his family, his organ, his music.

There is a figure to love—and Bach is growing alive in Bethlehem. I have not heard that a marble statue is to be erected to his memory; but a much finer monument has been built in the hearts of the people! And in my mind's eye I could see Bach enjoying it all immensely!

To sum up:

1. Bethlehem's music is really of the people and hence is significant.
2. Bethlehem's music is of a sort to change their whole character and bring beauty ever-increasing to the business and domestic life of the community.
3. Bethlehem's music is making the town the Mecca of musicians.
4. Bethlehem's experiment suggests something "bigger," which *can* be followed, and will be followed throughout the States, until there is a counterpart in every section of the country.
5. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, MacDowell, Brahms, Gluck, Haydn, Händel—and others are calling to be brought to life in a community like Bethlehem. It is not necessary to take only one; it is not even necessary to follow a fixed idea, though that is to be preferred.

The something "bigger" than the Bach Festivals at Bethlehem will be the sum total of the civic musical festivals in Akron, Belleville, Cleveland, Davenport, Easton, Fargo, Galveston, Hammond—and so on throughout the alphabet of the land!

# THE PASSING OF THE PRESSURE TOUCH

By WESLEY WEYMAN

**T**O question the efficacy of the pressure touch as a means of melodic expression, is to commit an act of iconoclasm hardly to be equalled in the whole range of pianoforte technique. Pressure has been the fetish of half a century in the art of tone production. No word has been used so constantly to describe melody playing, or to guide and stimulate the student to his best effort in that direction. Trite comparisons have been drawn upon, such as pressing the juice from ripe fruit; even a tremolo of the finger, a legitimate device in playing stringed instruments, has been advocated and not infrequently exhibited on the concert stage. But whatever the outward manifestation, it was always the pressure that was the basis of the principle. It is interesting and important to investigate the historical evolution of a custom so universal, and to study its advantages and its defects.

Four or five generations ago, when our musical forebears were still playing the clavichord, they were confronted by a technical problem so vastly different from our own to-day, that only those who have played both clavichord and modern pianoforte are able to appreciate the chasm which separates the two. One fact alone, however, apart from any other difference, suffices to show the fundamental irreconcilability between the ancient and the modern technique. The dip or drop of the key was very slight, only about one-half that of the present key; and the force required to start it in motion was little more than a feather's weight—an amount scarcely perceptible to our less sensitive fingers accustomed to exerting two ounces and a half of force to set in action the modern key. In other words, we find that the clavichord has a phenomenally "easy action," and that the key goes down only half as far as on the pianoforte of to-day. This fact, so admirably adapted to the lightest agility, together with the lack of resonance in the clavichord, and the lack of singing tone and varied nuance in the harpsichord, at once explains to us the characteristic quality of the music of the early period. It was limited mostly to movements of extreme speed, and this lightning rapidity was far more easily obtainable than it is on the modern instrument. Piano technique in the early period depended entirely on the lightest agility of the fingers, a purely



muscular force apparently emanating from the knuckles at the base of the fingers, though in fact lightly controlled by the hand behind them. Evenness was not difficult of attainment as the force exerted was so slight; and the purely percussive quality of touch was inoffensive to the ear in the low range of dynamics at one's command.

As we trace the development of music from the *clavecinistes* through Scarlatti to Mozart and Haydn, and finally to Beethoven, we find this constantly broadening musical scope accounted for by the concurrent change in the instrument from clavichord to piano and then to pianoforte. Already with Mozart we find sustained adagio and andante movements, although no one felt more keenly than he the inadequacy of his piano to express the tonal effects which he desired. For these he was obliged to turn to the strings and to the voice, while he patched out the rapidly dying tones of his piano melody with a pseudo-cantilena of roulades, repetitions and ornamental trceries. But with the advent of Beethoven we find the formation of a new melodic style, and the development of an instrument far more capable of expressing it. The romantic school was emerging from the classical period, freeing itself from shackles of artificiality and false propriety. Music followed literature in its great awakening to the fact that it was a medium of expression for human emotion and experience, and not merely a framework for the development of pyrotechnical roulades, or of involved *congetti* to be worked out according to mathematical rule. This outburst of the spirit from the throes of classical restraint required an adequate means of expression; and the older instruments with their limited resources were forced to make way for others with wider range of tone and greater dynamic power. The harpsichord served only to depict the soulless emotions of conventional figures, as did the contemporary drama through the *commedia dell'arte*; the soul-tragedy of a Beethoven—an undreamed of expression in pianistic art—required vastly larger resources. Only a pianoforte could furnish these—an instrument on which one could play *forte* as well as *piano*, with the entire dynamic range between. Yet to our modern ears these pianistic attainments would sound as slightly startling as the harmonic innovations of Beethoven and Hummel, with which they were contemporary.

With, then, the romantic period opening to music the scope of human experience, and the instrument offering a comparatively wide range of tonal possibilities, the superficiality of the old percussive finger touch was inadequate. The problem of the roulade and that of the cantilena were quite different. For the expression of a singing melody, the key required a more exact and constant control, and the

element of percussion had to be eliminated. Both these needs could be met by a gentle pressure exerted by the fingers. To press a key one must approach it comparatively gradually, take hold of it, and displace it with intention. Thus the actual touch itself, like the music it was used to express, contained a human element quite lacking in the light and superficial touch of the earlier schools.

This, it would seem, was the genesis of the pressure touch which has for many decades been the basis of all melody playing, and of all expression of tender emotion. It had indeed the advantage of a human element. It showed a vast advance in both art and instrument, in that it made the key an implement for creating varying tone-emotions. The performer was forced to take hold of the key and use it to a definite purpose, an attitude of mind which is still, indeed, the last word in modernity, the most important principle in the pianoforte technique of today.

Why, then, if pressure has so great a virtue, if it has served to transfer pianistic art from a basis of mere line to the realm of color and emotion, if it indeed forces us to the most important mental attitude toward the instrument, that of actually using the key to create definite and exact tones—why need we look farther for our melody touch?

We have seen that the clavichord touch was a purely muscular exertion of the fingers, and that the pressure touch was developed directly from it. It remained a purely muscular operation, but located itself in the palm of the hand, beyond the fingers, where the real control of the fingers is more readily felt. In its incipency, the actual cost of this muscular operation was slight; but through the following decades, the development of the pianoforte to its present orchestral proportions presented a quite different case. For the tones of enormous volume which we now require, a correspondingly enormous force must be exerted to overcome the "heavy action" of the modern pianoforte, and to produce in addition to this the desired tone. As it requires two and one-half ounces of force merely to set each key in motion, that act alone absorbs a surprising amount of strength, and yet this takes no account of the great force used to produce the actual tones we hear. The pressure is still exerted muscularly, but has been forced to transfer itself to the upper arm, as the hand alone is no longer adequate. Many teachers carefully locate the melody touch for their pupils on the under side of the upper arm, immediately below the shoulder, and then encourage them to press, press, press, until the amount of force used in playing a program is gigantic. If actually registered, the muscular energy required even in playing a Chopin Nocturne under these conditions

would astonish us, and would exhaust us by its very connotation. This expenditure, whether consciously felt or not, must necessarily react deleteriously on the nervous system of the performer.

A study of the mechanism of the piano reveals a farther disadvantage in pressure. Careful students of the instrument now realize that the tone is actually produced when the key has traversed only half its descent, and not when it hits the felt pad at the bottom. This fact requires us, if we wish to make beautiful tones, and to reproduce exactly the musical vision in our minds, to aim our force with the greatest exactness to this place in the descent of the key. This principle is almost impossible of attainment with pressure, which is bound to aim the force not merely at the pads beneath the keys, but, indeed, far beyond them. The flattened sensation at the end of one's finger bears evident witness to the suddenness with which the active force was arrested on reaching the pads—already far beyond the crucial point in tone production. Indeed, is it not safe to assert that the person who presses is necessarily prevented from aiming his forces correctly? This is painfully evident in the playing of those who press out fortissimo chords from the shoulder. Is not a really beautiful fortissimo the rarest quality that one hears in one's concert-going season? And yet a harsh, unmusical fortissimo is an unpardonable hiatus in the equipment of one who claims to be an artist, particularly as beauty of tone is the simplest of qualities to attain to, if one knows how one's instrument must be treated. Thus we find the pressure touch, while incorporating the most important mental attitude in piano-playing—that of consciously using the key to create tone—at the same time grossly transcending a physical law which is incontrovertible for every correctly produced tone—that of aiming the force exactly at the proper place, and not beyond. One aims one's foot with the utmost care and exactitude for every step. When one inadvertently steps an inch below one's expectation, one receives the same violent shock that the string receives when the force is aimed a quarter of an inch below the point of impact of the hammer with the string.

Again, our knowledge of acoustics reveals the inadequacy of pressure in producing tones of every quality such as must be at our command. We know that the difference between a bright tone and a dull one is one of harmonics or overtones. The bright or brilliant tone is produced by the over-emphasis of the smaller sections or harmonics of a string, through a sudden attack by the hammer. The dull or melodic tone is produced by a very careful and gradual displacement of the string by the hammer, in such wise as to suppress

as far as possible the upper harmonics. In other words, the emphasis of the higher overtones in a tone gives it definiteness, brightness and aggressiveness; the suppression of these overtones gives it fulness, a vague suggestiveness, and a remarkable carrying power even in pianissimo. This carrying power is due to the fact that the vibration naturally continues longer when the string vibrates as a regular whole, rather than as a series of small segments. Although possessing the meditative character essential to melody-playing, tone of this quality is most rarely heard. The direct reason for this is the practically universal use of the pressure touch which precludes tones of this character. To press, a finger must be curved, unyielding in the knuckles, and inelastic throughout at the moment of producing tone. This combination can only result in a sudden impact of hammer against string, with a tone of brilliant quality in which the harmonics are emphasized. Hence the pressure touch is inherently unadapted to depicting emotions of thoughtful, suggestive or vague quality on the modern pianoforte.

How are we then to get these results so rarely heard in concert and yet so essential to the artist who aims to have at his command the whole range of emotional expression? In these days an artist is indeed poorly equipped who must limit himself to a single tone color, or must distort an emotion by depicting it with a quality adapted rather for its reverse. Many pianists are as inconsistent as the painter who paints his grass pink and his sky green. What other force than pressure is at our command?

Only comparatively recently, since the pianoforte in its present orchestral proportions has required of the artist an enormous expenditure of force, have we come to realize that the arm is available not only in its active attitude of exerting muscular energy, but also in its passive attitude of relaxed weight. Here, indeed, we have at our command a gigantic power, capable in amount of meeting any of the requirements of the modern instrument for the loudest forte passages; and since the very creation of the force of weight in the arm is due to a relaxing or letting-go of the supporting muscles, the more we let go, the greater force we have. There can be no fatigue in relaxation, and we can in consequence look forward to our forte passages rather as periods of recuperation than as the exhausting and muscle-straining ordeals which the pressure touch has inevitably doomed them to be in the past. The opening pages of Tschaiowsky's Concerto in B Flat Minor, or similar passages of chords, should react upon one only with the comfort and ease of relaxation, and with the stimulating exhilaration of a mechanism which works with no trace of opposition or strain.

Furthermore, this weight force, powerful as it is when unrestrained, is the most easily controlled of all forces at our command. It may be released in every degree from the softest pianissimo to the mightiest forte of which the instrument is capable. It can be aimed to the exact place in the descent of the key where the tone is produced, giving as a result a tone of complete fulness and carrying power. It can be caught up again instantaneously by the mere willing of the sensation of lightness so that the arm with the rapidity of thought is as light as a feather. So immediate, indeed, is the response, that the released weight need never reach the pads under the keys, although the momentum would naturally carry the key lightly down to its resting-place. Yet most important of all is the fact that weight can be used with much greater deliberation than muscular force, through a yielding of knuckles and joints. A flat finger is particularly adapted to weight in melody playing and the joints of both finger and wrist should yield at the instant of tone-production. This reluctance in the descent of the key in turn sends the hammer against the string with greatly reduced speed, and the string is set into vibration without the emphasis of the undesired harmonics. As a result, we receive the effect of a dull, full, resonant, thoughtful tone in marked contrast to the bright and energetic quality of tone which pressure is bound to produce.

Here, then, in weight of arm, we have a force which fills the deficiencies of pressure in melody playing. It cannot exhaust, as it causes no effort. Indeed its very existence is due to a lack of effort—relaxation. It can with ease be projected to the exact place necessary for reproducing in tone our musical idea. It can instantly be sustained again before reaching the felt pads beneath the keys, leaving the arm lightly poised. Finally, it opens to us an entire new range of tone color quite unattainable under the use of muscular force or pressure. By no other means can one portray the meditative, passive moods which underlie nocturnes and similar melodies, particularly those vague, suggestive qualities which are the very basis of Debussy, and the mystic school. To limit one's tone-palette to pressure and the muscular elements of touch, is to reduce poetry to puritan practicality. The artist of to-day who has not the resources of weight at his command is hopelessly old fashioned, and should confine himself to the music and instrument of one hundred years ago, for which his touch is essentially and inherently fitted.

## STENDHAL AND ROSSINI

By HENRY PRUNIÈRES<sup>1</sup>

**B**EYLE was taking a walk in the *Giardini* at Milan. A German military band was playing and Beyle listened as he eyed the women who passed by. Having grown accustomed to life in Milan he yielded himself to the beauties of art and of nature in Italy, to the charm of amorous confidences, to the delights of the theater and of music. He recognized an impassioned melody by Mozart which "one hundred and fifty *faultless* wind instruments" played with a "particular melancholy," and his sensitive soul was stirred. Then the band began another piece, and this time Beyle was astonished as he heard the light music, effervescent and sparkling like the wine of Asti, which seemed to twit everybody and everything with its mockery. Upon asking who the composer was, he was told that it was "a young man named Rossini," and was urged to go to see the charming *Tancred* of this new, fashionable composer.

From this time forth Beyle heard the name of Rossini on every tongue and was astonished at not having heard his compositions before. Everywhere, at the concerts, at the balls, in the drawing-rooms, in the cafés, on the streets, they played airs from *Tancred* and from *The Italian in Algiers*.

At first Beyle rebelled. All of Rossini's tempi and rhythms were like "eel pie"; and then what did this music, always lively, elegant and smart, pretend to express? It was a ragout, a piquant sauce, a veritable lobster bisque meant to excite blasé tastes and jaded senses. But what enjoyment could this deluge of dancing, leaping little notes afford a man, who like Beyle, demanded of music the expression of tender emotions? The form, the "physique of music" concerned him very little. It is, after all, merely the adornment, the more or less sumptuous cloak, which drapes the composer's thought. The latter alone is important. A melody by Mozart, by Cimarosa, gave him the impression of being in communion with the very emotion, with the sentiment which had inspired it. Soul spoke to soul. He could not help finding Rossini amusing, but how much he preferred Mozart, who never amused

<sup>1</sup>Preface to the author's edition of "La Vie de Rossini" in Stendhal's "Œuvres complètes."

him. "He is like one's heart's mistress, serious and often sad, but all the more beloved just because of her sadness." Cimarosa has portrayed love in all its phases with a marvellous delicacy of touch and richness of color. His gaiety is natural, naïve, spontaneous. Paesiello charms us with irresistible grace. All three in varying degree and by different means gratify the deeper passions of the soul. Rossini contents himself with an agreeable tickling of the epidermis. His crescendos, his finales, provoke explosions of nervous and factitious gaiety, of forced laughter. He electrifies his hearers, he does not move them.

If Rossini had never had other rivals on the Italian stage than Mozart and Cimarosa, Beyle would never have departed from his disdainful attitude toward him. But this was not at all the case. While French audiences accepted novelties with difficulty and remained desperately faithful to works which had once given pleasure, the Italians, on the contrary, grew disaffected with old operas for the sole reason that they had been applauded long enough. Cimarosa, Paesiello, were no longer in fashion. Mozart was enjoyed by a mere handful of *dilettanti*. His music seemed obscure, learned, of a sombre violence. He was admired more than he was loved. Simon Mayr, Paër, Fioravanti, Guglielmi, Generali, Mosca, Anfossi, held the boards. It was they who reconciled Stendhal with Rossini. Beside Mozart the new-comer appeared little; beside Paër he was a giant.

After the void, the interminable *ennui*, of an opera by Simon Mayr, with his emphatic style, his coarse gaiety of the "good fellow without *esprit*," the music of Rossini seemed to Beyle radiant with youth. The composer "scattered out new ideas with lavish hands. Sometimes he succeeded, sometimes he missed his aim. Everything is piled up, pell-mell, all negligence. It is the profusion and the carelessness of riches without limit." Music "fashioned out of nothing," light, vapory and subtle, a veritable magic tissue woven with rays of sunlight. You stifle when you listen to an opera by that Germanic pedant, Mayr. Go to a Rossini opera, and suddenly you feel the pure, fresh air of the upper Alps; you feel yourself breathing more freely, you seem born anew; it was genius you needed.

The mediocrity of contemporary musicians compelled Stendhal to recognize the superiority and the genius of Rossini. He preserved his cult of Mozart and of Cimarosa, but he admitted that Rossini had renewed the *opera seria*, had infused new life into this decrepit *genre*. He admitted that men were thoroughly amused by *The Italian in Algiers*, *The Touchstone* (*La Pietra del Paragone*),

*The Barber of Seville*, even while he reiterated the dictum of the older *dilettanti*, that Rossini had never written a real *buffo* aria, and that Cimarosa and Paesiello remained inimitable in this style. The welcome given to the first operas of the son of Pesaro in Paris brought about the final conversion of Stendhal to "Rossinism." He had suddenly realized that this brilliant, superficial music, sparkling with malice and *esprit*, was just made to ravish the Parisians. It was for this very reason, to some extent, that the seductive charms of the "Voltaire of music" had only partly captivated him at first. When he saw that in Paris *Tancred* and the *Italian in Algiers* provoked the absurd criticisms of Berton, whose operas bored one to death, he felt his admiration for Rossini redoubled immediately. Beyle was endowed with a marvellous spirit of contradiction. At Milan, he preserved for a long time his "anti-Rossinian" attitude, but with his Parisian friends he became the apostle of the new music.

In his desire to become better acquainted with Rossini's operas, he ended by loving them. As a matter of fact, he was always, to use his own expression, a "Rossinist of 1815." A fervent admirer of the *Italian in Algiers*, *The Touchstone*, *The Turk in Italy*, and even, though more moderately, of the *Barber*, he never acknowledged the works of the Neapolitan period.

Passages of *Othello* and of *Moses* moved him profoundly, but he never, in their entirety, accepted these operas, in which the German symphonic style appeared to make itself felt to the detriment of the Italian melodic quality. He could never pardon Rossini for the vocal writing of his last compositions, the vocalises, like flourishes on the clarinet, and the embellishments fused into the melodic line.

In spite of his reservations, in spite of his resistance, his taste developed almost unconsciously. One day he noticed with sorrow that the music of Cimarosa no longer produced in him the same effect as formerly. The feelings, the passions, seemed to him expressed "like rose water," and he had to agree that, while his chosen composer had "more ideas, and above all, much better ideas than Rossini," Rossini, to make up for this, showed an entirely different mastery of style. The same disillusion in the case of Paesiello. He was charming, exquisite, but after half an hour of this delicacy one surprised one's self in a yawn. Only his Mozart worship remained intact, and suffered no harm from his very lively enjoyment of Rossini.

In his own phrase, Beyle would have said that for Mozart he felt the "love-passion" in all its beauty, its grandeur and its purity;



and that for Rossini he felt only the "love-taste," without allowing himself to be blinded in any way to the defects of the object of that taste.

If Beyle showed indulgence toward the faults of harmonic orthography which aroused the ire of the pedants and of the envious critics of Italy, France and Germany, he did not in return easily pardon Rossini for his indolence, his negligence, his continual repetitions, his errors of sense and taste. Like a disabused lover, he did not fail to mingle a few disagreeable observations with his praises. Now, the defects which he emphasizes are precisely those into which he himself falls. One such criticism, aimed at Rossini, could be applied to Beyle himself without modification. He reproaches Rossini with writing an opera just as he would a letter. Are the *Life of Rossini*, or *Rome, Naples and Florence*, anything else than long letters written by fits and starts? In reality, if Beyle feels for the works of Rossini a singular sentiment of mingled admiration and hostility, of sympathy and repulsion, it is because they too much resemble his own works, and because Rossini is a great deal less the Voltaire of music than the Stendhal of music.

We must, of course, leave Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* and Rossini's *William Tell* out of consideration; but is there anything which so much resembles Stendhal's early works, with their happy inventions in the way of expression, their delicacy of thought and analysis, the fine observations scattered all through them, lost in an inextricable confusion of loose phrases and the rigmarole of reiterated ideas, as the first operas of Rossini, in which a few pieces, a veritable treat for the ears and for the finer understanding, are knit together well or ill by the most insipid transitions and padded out with most banal formulas? I imagine that Beyle discovered a little of himself in Rossini, and resented the discovery with a certain irritation.

He experienced an analogous feeling when circumstances brought him into personal contact with Rossini. Rossini would have declared that he had never seen this gentleman who was mentioned to him. It is very possible that the musician who, in every town in which he stayed to be present at performances of his operas, had carelessly watched a line of some hundred *dilettanti* pass by him, disputing among themselves the honor of being introduced to him, had preserved no recollection of the little, thick-set, whiskered man with keen eyes, who was a party to his conversations with the poet, Monti, or who, seated at the same table, laughed at his sprightly repartee. Beyle, in 1820, spoke Italian but poorly and could not readily have taken part in a general conversation when

a man with such caustic wit as Rossini's took an active share in it. He preferred to keep silent, to listen and to lose not a word. If Stendhal made of whole cloth his story of his meeting with the composer in the inn at Terracina in 1817, it is certain that he saw him often in Milan in the drawing-rooms which he frequented between 1819 and 1821. Before being presented to Rossini, Beyle knew him well through the many anecdotes, agreeable or scandalous, which were told of the composer. He heard not only the *bon-mots* and gallant adventures attributed to Rossini, that supplied material for conversation in the boxes at the Scala which Beyle visited night after night, but he could pick up bits of most amusing gossip and scandal about the composer in the salon of Elena Vigano, where he went thrice weekly after the theater. Elena was the daughter of the celebrated choreograph whose glory, in the eyes of Stendhal, equalled that of Canova, of Rossini, even of Napoleon. She was a charming woman, a thorough musician, with a pretty voice, who liked to gather round her, from eleven o'clock in the evening until two in the morning, fifteen or twenty amateurs and artists, who, like her, were passionately fond of music. No formality, no ceremony. One went to these soirées in street boots if one wished; one stretched out at ease on a sofa and was charmed by the airs which the fascinating diva sang with consummate art. One was not obliged to contribute to the conversation. One talked or remained silent entirely according to one's natural inclination. There, surely, Beyle heard the most interesting discussions about music, and there he laid in a stock of anecdotes about the composers then in fashion. The amiable "Nina" knew them all. Simon Mayr was an old friend of her father's. Rossini had been her teacher and honored her with his friendship. Michele Carafa was quite at home in that house. Beyle could not be better situated to pick up the echoes of the life of the theater and of music in Italy.

He had, moreover, had a chance, in the house of some other friends, to make the acquaintance of the very young singer, Adelaide Schiassetti, whose angelic face made one forget her slightly deformed body. The daughter of an Italian general and a countess, she was "proud as forty aristocracies," and created a furor when she was in voice. Beyle cultivated her acquaintance and took pleasure in hearing her sing Rossini's airs. She sought, but without avail, to make him enjoy the operas of Mercadante, a new composer in whom she was interested.

Beyle frequented another house in which the memory of the youth, Rossini, had been kept alive. He was well acquainted with the sisters Mombelli. It was for them, to a libretto written by

their mother, and with the advice of their father, a celebrated tenor, that Rossini at the age of fourteen had composed in Bologna his opera, *Demetrius and Polibius*, which the sisters afterwards sang all over Italy. One of them had married a journalist, Angelo Lambertini, a savant and a fool, an excellent violin player and an intimate friend of Rossini's. At the Mombelli house Beyle could hear many a tale of adventure in Rossini's early life, and was amused to hear father Mombelli, who in the days of his glory had been on terms of great intimacy with Cimarosa, Sacchini and Paesiello, declaim against "ornaments and piquant sauce à la Rossini."

It was not before November, 1819, that Beyle was introduced to Rossini, with whom he was already so well acquainted by hearsay. The conversationalist amused him, the man was antipathetic. So much wit, verve, animation and waggishness could not leave him indifferent. He took a lively pleasure in observing him, in listening to his discussions with Monti, and received as oracles his observations and criticisms in musical matters; but the coarse Epicurean, fond of high living, was repugnant to him. He was shocked to find a man who carried out the principles of "Beylism" to their very last consequences. Beyle, it is true, had formulated the theory of the pursuit of happiness and maintained that every man ought to take his pleasure where he found it, but he did not, in fact, feel much sympathy with those who were too easily contented. He who, at this very period and in spite of his truculent letters to his friend, de Mareste, suffered cruelly because of his lofty passion for Matilde Dembrusky-Viscontini, was astonished that an artist like Rossini could limit his desires to being courted and petted by several women at the same time, setting them down plumply and without ceremony when he had enough of them, "eating like three ogres, twenty beefsteaks a day," scrimping, haggling, hoarding, making the lover of his mistress support him, in brief, living like "a disgusting pig." There were also, in the character of the artist, many things that Beyle could not approve of. Rossini did not conceal the fact that he wrote operas only to make money, and that, when he had laid by enough to guarantee his income, he counted on abandoning music and taking a rest. One has gone far afield to find the reasons why Rossini ceased to compose after *William Tell*. It will suffice to cast a glance at Stendhal's correspondence. There, under the date of November 2, 1819, in a letter to de Mareste we read: "I saw Rossini yesterday upon his arrival. He will be twenty-eight years old next April. He wants to quit working at thirty." Ten years later, Rossini,

having secured the income which he deemed necessary, realized the dream of his life. He snapped his pen in two and consecrated himself to the joys of gastronomic art. This decision, although it stunned the public at large, could cause but little astonishment for Stendhal. He, who cultivated letters for the love of letters and above all for the love of the ideas he wished to express, could not approve of such a corruption of the rôle of the artist. The pursuit of happiness, as Rossini practised it, could not but appear to him as a caricature of his dearest theories. And yet he could not bear Rossini a grudge because of this. If a Frenchman or an Englishman had conducted himself in this fashion, he would have despised him. But how could one be indignant with, how could one even take seriously, this Olympian buffoon? He offered sacrifices to his instincts with such tranquil assurance, with such natural ease, with such indifference to opinion! At need, he knew so well how to justify himself with a pun, and to make game of all, of himself before all others. Beyle was too well aware of Rossini's genius to think of measuring him with the common measure, but this somewhat spoiled his great man for him. The more so as his admiration had a certain admixture of antipathy. It is this complex sentiment which manifests itself in all that Stendhal has written on Rossini and his work.

Beyle, driven from Milan in 1821 by calumnies which represented him as a spy of the French government, returned to Paris, where again he found Rossini's music triumphant at the *Théâtre Louvois*. After *The Happy Deception* (*L'Inganno Felice*), *Tancred*, *The Italian in Algiers*, *The Barber of Seville*, there were performed in the course of two seasons from 1821 to 1822, six Rossini operas unknown in France: *The Touchstone*, *Elisabeth*, *Othello*, *The Thieving Magpie* (*La Gazza Ladra*), *Cinderella*, *Moses*. Regretting always the wonderful voices he had but lately heard, the orchestra of the Scala, so discreet and so supple, and the marvellous stage-settings of Senquirico and Perego, who knew so well how to persuade "the imagination to take the first steps into the land of illusions," Stendhal attended the Italian opera assiduously. There he found Madame Pasta again, who in the rôle of Desdemona made all Paris weep. He attempted to reconstruct his Milanese life. In the evening he went to the opera or into society and toward midnight he made his entry regularly at Madame Pasta's. There, listening to the music or playing faro by way of distraction with the Italian friends of the diva, he imagined himself in Milan again.

Beyle had rented a room at the *Hotel des Lillois*, 63 rue de Richelieu, attracted, without doubt, by the neighborhood of Madame

Pasta, who occupied the first floor of this hostelry. He had only to go downstairs to imagine himself in Italy. Around the piano the same discussions took place on the subject of Rossini as he had recently heard at the house of Nina Viganò.

In Paris Beyle was surely the man who knew Rossini and his works best. Up to that time there had appeared, in France as well as in Italy, only the criticisms and reviews in the journals, which were written as the works of the master from Pesaro were performed. Of the life of the man not more was known than a certain number of more or less authentic anecdotes. Assembling all his recollections, running through the sketches of his letters to his friends, and aided perhaps by a few scattered publications carefully preserved, Beyle wrote an article on Rossini for an English review published in Paris, to which he was a regular contributor. In January, 1822, *The Paris Monthly Review* published, under the pseudonym of *Alceste*, an English translation of this essay. It reached its aim and profited by the curiosity which the name of Rossini had aroused. Slightly altered it was immediately reprinted in two great British reviews: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *Galignani's Monthly Review*. A Milan journal got possession of it and printed an Italian translation. This article was included in a volume in company with a pedantic dissertation on the æsthetic aims of Rossini's music. This work appeared in Milan in 1824, under the title of *Rossini and His Music*, almost at the same time as the two volumes of Beyle's *Life of Rossini* in Paris.

However ardent a Stendhalian one may be, it is difficult to attribute this great success solely to the merit of the article in the *Paris Monthly Review*. Translated into English or Italian, the grace of the style is dissipated. There remains only the matter stripped bare: facts and opinions. Now, one cannot pretend that Beyle revealed himself in this study as a very well-informed historian or as a subtle critic. It was evidently written to order hastily. The author trusted to his memory for the anecdotes and the information relating to Rossini's youth. It is for the most part wrong, or at any rate very inexact, whether it be a question of the date of the composer's birth, of his family, or of the beginning of his musical career. One finds, moreover, numerous disputable details in the *Life of Rossini*: an air in *Tancred* borrowed from a Greek chant, letters addressed by the musician to "Signora Rossini, mother of the illustrious *maestro* at Pesaro," Rossini's mystification of his travelling companions on the way to Reggio, the first performance of the *Barber* at Rome, instances of the incredible facility with which the composer worked, etc.

Stendhal had ended his article by artfully mingling criticisms with his praises, as a man who refused to be "duped entirely by Rossini's whipped cream and fanfaronades." He admired the extreme rapidity, the brilliance and the freshness of his melodies, but he deplored the fact that the soul could find no deeper enjoyment in them. What will remain of *The Barber of Seville* when that work is as old as *Don Giovanni*?

In Italy the article appeared to the Rossini party as a pamphlet against their god. Signora Gertrude Giorgi Righetti, who had created the rôle of Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and that of Cinderella, believed herself personally involved in the quarrel, for Stendhal had neglected to sing the praises of her voice in speaking of the *Barber*. She had retired from the stage, and, married to a worthy bourgeois citizen, lived in Bologna, without, however, resigning herself to oblivion. She took up the pen to confound the *giornalista inglese*, and to refute, point by point, his lying assertions.

The pamphlet which we owe to the ex-prima donna's rage is entitled: *Notes of a lady, formerly a singer, on Maestro Rossini, in reply to what the English Journalist in Paris wrote of him in the Summer of 1822, as reported in a Milan Gazette of the same year*. This little work of some sixty pages is extremely diverting. On every page the singer's indignation against the foreign journalists breaks forth. Stendhal is not the only object of her invective. Did not an infamous Paris critic dare to insinuate that if, in the book of Cinderella, a lost bracelet was substituted for the traditional glass slipper, it was because the actress who played the title-rôle had big feet?

In the course of her pamphlet Signora Righetti gives us valuable information about Rossini, about his family, and above all, about the memorable evening on which *The Barber of Seville* was performed for the first time in Rome. Did Beyle know the brochure when he wrote his *Life of Rossini*? Evidently many of the inaccuracies pointed out by the singer do not recur in Stendhal's book. But he may have drawn his information from other sources. It seems hardly possible that Beyle would have allowed certain picturesque details in the lady's story to escape him. He knew by hearsay that the piece which was greeted with hisses the first night was repeated with great success the next day. But if he had been aware of the scenes which Signora Righetti describes: the furious crowd interrupting the first performance and then going, the next night, to awaken Rossini from his sleep, invading his bed-chamber to congratulate him in his bed upon the success of his opera, would he not have made use of this in his *Life of Rossini*?

On the whole Signora Righetti does not fulfill her promises. She does not refute Stendhal except in a few biographical details. She confines herself more often to disputing unimportant points and completing certain data only summarily indicated by Stendhal. Her great preoccupation is to keep her own memory green, to remind the world that she possessed "the most beautiful voice ever heard in Rome." In addition she does not fail to slip in a few allusions to her own beauty and to emphasize the boundless admiration that Rossini displayed toward her at the time when she did him the honor to interpret his operas.

While the article in the *Paris Monthly Review* was causing all this excitement, Stendhal sat in his hotel room, writing *An Essay on the History of Music in Italy from 1800 to 1823*. The unexpected success of his article induced him to bring out this new work in English. By the 4th of December it was well advanced, for he wrote to Mr. Sutton Sharpe in London that this *History of Music at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* had just been translated into English by a friend, and that it would make a volume of about four hundred octavo pages. "There are not many ideas in this little work," he explains, "but it is full of little facts which have the merit of being true."

Through the mediation of a young English barrister, Mr. Luby, negotiations were carried on with the publishing house of Murray, which had already brought out *The Life of Haydn*, but they led to nothing. Beyle withdrew his manuscript and subjected it to considerable modification. During the Winter and Spring of 1823 Beyle worked at his *Life of Rossini*. He had decided that this work should be seriously authoritative. Friends furnished him with analyses of the scores, others sent him from Italy biographical data about Rossini. The salon of Madame Pasta must have been a rich source of information for Stendhal. In 1823 only ten years had elapsed since the triumph of *Tancred* in Venice, and the history of Rossini's operas was still living in the memories of the *dilettanti* gathered around Madame Pasta's piano. Beyle wrote the preface of his new work in September 1823 and dated it Montmorency, where he often stayed during the warm season. At this time the *Life of Rossini* was ended with a chronological list of the composer's works. The English translator must have worked with a manuscript copy of the *Life*.

In January, 1824, the publisher, Hookham, in London brought out *The Memoirs of Rossini by the Author of The Lives of Haydn and Mozart*. In the preface the translator declines to identify himself with the anonymous author's judgment of the talent of Madame

Colbran. He warns the reader that he has had to cut various passages concerning religion, politics, Italian manners and morals, and that he has added from his own pen information regarding Rossini's trip to Vienna in 1822, and the success of *Semiramis*. As an excuse for the typographical errors which may be encountered, he alleges the haste with which the book had to be printed. Rossini had been in England since December 7, 1823, and we can understand the publisher's desire to bring before the public a work so strikingly opportune.

I imagine that the English *Memoirs of Rossini* represent the first draft of *The Life of Rossini*, revised and corrected by a translator anxious not to let the subject disappear under the accumulation of digressions and accessory details. It is a well constructed work, clear, authoritative, lively, giving valuable historical information and judicious analyses of Rossini's operas. It is, in fine, the material from which *The Life of Rossini* was to be made, but condensed, arranged, reduced by one-half. From the historical point of view this is the first and, without doubt, the best book written on Rossini in the first half of the nineteenth century. For Stendhalian, however, it is far from possessing the same interest as *The Life of Rossini*, which is an improvisation of genius, exuberant with life, bubbling over with ideas.

While Stritch was laboring to translate and summarize the contents of the manuscript which Stendhal had sent him, the latter was at work completing and augmenting it with a view to publication in French. He added notes everywhere. The performances of Rossini operas at the *Théâtre Louvois* suggested to him reflections on the execution of these works in Italy and in France. He wrote several new chapters, most of them entirely foreign to the subject, which he intercalated among the analyses of the operas.

*The Memoirs of Rossini* had been out for several months in London, and Stendhal, without hurrying himself, was still reworking his manuscript. He had even requested his friend, de Mareste, to furnish him with a chapter on the history of the establishment of the *opéra bouffe* in Paris from 1800 to 1823. He had only to add a note attributing this study to "M. Adolphe de Besançon." In this way de Mareste was enabled to denounce the intrigues of Paër and his associates against Rossini's music.

"If you will not do this chapter for me (writes Beyle), you will give me a devilish lot of trouble, for I was away and have no recollection of the facts. You can pour out your bile on the idiotic administration of Madame Catalani, and you can display your genius by sketching out a scheme of organization for this opera.



The good Barilli, who looks favorably upon you, can give you all the data you may need, between two hands of *faro*." And Beyle continues to develop his ideas on the ideal constitution of an Italian opera in Paris. We shall find them again in Chapter 43 of *The Life of Rossini*. At the last moment the author adds to the end of his manuscript a long letter from Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. He has succeeded in transforming a coherent work into a monster. Let us not complain, however, for the monster is a masterpiece.

*The Life of Rossini* by M. de Stendhal appeared in 1824, published by Auguste Boullard and Company, booksellers in Paris. It was graced with portraits of Rossini and of Mozart and bore as a motto these words, attributed to Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*: "Let your thoughts go out like this insect, which we set free in the air with a string to its leg."

The work was successful and helped to revive interest in *Rome, Naples and Florence*. Beyle, however, anxious to create the impression that the first edition was immediately exhausted, had a copy of the title struck off with the remark: *Second Edition*, and inserted between the preface and the introduction a notice of four pages on *The Life and Works of Mozart*. We do not know how large a return *The Life of Rossini* brought Stendhal, but it was surely much more than he derived from his famous novels. It spread over the whole world. In the very year of its publication, Professor Wendt in Leipzig brought out a German translation, or to be more exact, an adaptation. If the spirit and the style of Stendhal were somewhat dimmed by the varnish of the English translation, they were effaced still more in the German version under the thick coating with which they were covered by the conscientious German editor, who was not skilful in his handling of the explanatory notes and emendations.

In Italy *The Life of Rossini* was much sought after in spite of its high price, but more through malignant curiosity than because of any taste or understanding for the work. Those who did not simply draw upon the book as plagiarists, were pleased to point out its biographical inaccuracies, and to insinuate that Beyle had been the victim of Rossini's jokes and *rodomontades*. The admirers of Rossini found fault with the author for not having handled their idol more gently in his criticisms, and Rossini's detractors were astonished that Beyle should have taken him so seriously.

Even in France it was a matter of good tone among musical critics to treat *The Life of Rossini* as a work of pure fantasy, which did not prevent them from stealing from it, even reproducing entire chapters in biographies of Rossini published in Belgium. Stendhal was bitterly reproached with having fallen into errors of detail, and

even with a lack of sympathetic spirit. "If he had subjected all his ideas to the domination of one fruitful parent thought," wrote Joseph d'Ortigue in 1829, "this writer would have turned out only a little work, a pamphlet. M. de Stendhal has had nothing but *esprit*; he has written two volumes."

The memory of the famous case of plagiarism of which Beyle had been guilty toward Carpani when he published *The Life of Haydn*, aroused the suspicion that in this case also he might have stolen the property of another. It so happened that in this very year, 1824, Carpani had brought out his *Rossiniane*, a collection of letters on the music of Rossini and Weber which had, most of them, appeared previously in the *Biblioteca Italiana*. So much more reason for accusing Stendhal of renewed plagiarism. But this time the reproach is without foundation. There is not a line in *The Rossiniane* which could have inspired the author of *The Life of Rossini*. If there are, at times, similarities, it is a question of commonplaces without interest. Better still—whether as a result of chance or owing to a fixed purpose—Stendhal had abstained from commenting on those operas of Rossini which had been treated by Carpani. Fétis did not take the trouble to read either *The Life of Rossini* or *The Rossiniane* to bring his charge of plagiarism against Stendhal. In truth, Beyle took his material where he found it with a too graceful ease to escape, perhaps, on this one occasion when he was not poaching, the ill will of his detractors. *The Life of Rossini* is a work at first hand and of immediate conception. In it the personality of Stendhal is manifested tumultuously from end to end with its worst defects and its most admirable qualities.

Those who, on the strength of the title, seek in *The Life of Rossini* a biography in the usual sense of the word, will be doomed to disappointment. It is no more a biography than the *Promenades in Rome or Rome, Naples and Florence* are guides to Italy for the use of the ordinary tourist. Some one has characterized *Rome, Naples and Florence* as "a journal of sensations." One might say that *The Life of Rossini* is a journal of sensations experienced by Stendhal in the course of a voyage through the field of music.

Stendhal was acquainted with only a limited territory in this field: Mozart, Cimarosa, Paesello, Rossini—but he knew that territory well and not indirectly through others. He was ignorant of all the glorious past of Italy. Allegri's *Miserere*, heard at the Sistine Chapel, appeared to him like music from afar, almost barbarous, contemporaneous with Dante and the Gothic cathedrals, even though he takes note of the last offshoots of the polyphonic style which tradition had kept alive in the schools of Rome up to

the end of the seventeenth century. For Stendhal, music begins with Pergolesi, Vinci, and Leo. And yet he knew of these charming composers of the eighteenth century only because he had read of them in the letters of the President de Brosses, in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and in Burney's *History*. He mentions their names and passes on. Let us be grateful to him for not seeking to make a display of erudition. He would have felt himself obliged to adapt and translate chapters from some more or less well informed foreign historian. We should have had another plagiarism in the style of *The Life of Haydn*, a strong work, very agreeable without doubt, bearing Stendhal's mark, but not contributing much to his glory.

Limiting his desires to the writing of the musical history of his own times, that is to say of the "era of Rossini," he did not have to borrow erudition from others. It would, moreover, have been difficult for him to copy any other writer for the simple reason that, aside from the newspaper articles, the criticisms and the polemical writings in the press, no book summing up Rossini's life and works had yet been written. Now, it is not an act of plagiarism to make use of published documents or manuscripts in writing a historical work.

For the rest, the biographical element in *The Life of Rossini* is reduced to a few data: the date of the composer's birth, his family, his education, his *débuts*, the dates of first performances. . . . All this could have been condensed into a paragraph of twenty lines for a dictionary. There were certainly in Italy, among Beyle's friends, at least a dozen persons who could have procured this information for him. All the rest of the book is made up of analyses of operas, anecdotes, and æsthetic, political, moral, critical, philosophic and literary considerations. The printed sources of *The Life of Rossini* are, accordingly, insignificant.

There are found here and there, in this book, passages which give the impression of having been adapted from the Italian: for instance, the technical dissertation on singing in Chapter 83; but Beyle contented himself with translating a few pages from some book, or perhaps he made use of a note written especially for him by some obliging friend. Beyle reserved for himself the task of fixing the collective character of his work. It is not his own personal judgment that he gives from beginning to end, but the opinion, or rather the opinions, which he has heard expressed by those around him.

I pray the reader to believe (he writes) "that the *I* in this work is but a form of speech, which might be replaced by: "They say in Naples

in the salon of the Marquis Berio . . ." or: "M. Peruchini of Venice, this well informed amateur, whose sentiments are law, told us one day at Madame Benzoni's . . ." or: "This evening, in the circle which gathers around the armchair of Mr. Attorney Antonini in Bologna, I heard Mr. Agguchi maintain that the harmony of the Germans . . ." or: "Count Giraud was of the opinion that Rossini's friend, Mr. Gherardi, had fought to the bitter end. . . ."

And Beyle does not hesitate to declare that "to write this *Life of Rossini* he has collected from all sides, for example, from the German and Italian journals, the judgments on this great man and his works.

This time he exaggerates. A few years earlier he had claimed that he owed nothing to Carpani, whom he had despoiled even while he scoffed at him. Now he exerts himself to convince us that his *Life of Rossini* is nothing but a "cento," made up of extracts from journals. That Stendhal drew useful bits of information from the newspapers, is quite probable; but as a matter of fact, he made little use of them, as one is quite convinced in looking through the pages of the gazettes and journals then published in Italy. As he himself very justly remarks a little farther on, "the articles in the journals are either hymns of praise or Philippics and rarely offer anything positive."

A historical and critical work like *The Life of Rossini*, could not be wholly a work of fantasy. Authorities are necessary. To procure them Beyle certainly made his friends work very hard. We have seen him ask Baron de Mareste for a note on the *opéra bouffe* in Paris. He must have procured from able amateurs the analyses of operas which he used in writing his work. One can thus explain certain contradictions which may be discovered in the course of the book between the rather severe appreciations of certain operas and the eulogies paid elsewhere in the book to the various pieces of which they are made up. Stendhal does not fail to point out that he has forewarned his readers in good faith. It is their task to distinguish between the expression of his own opinions and the reproduction of the opinions of others. It is not always easy to do this, and for the uninitiated reader there are often contradictions between the praises and the criticisms of one and the same work. Stendhal is never very kindly disposed toward Rossini, but he worked with notes furnished him by ardent admirers of the master. Hence the conflict, which is, moreover, very amusing to observe when one is initiated. Precisely because of this abundance of argument for and against Rossini's music, Stendhal's book is truly representative of the opinions current in the drawing-rooms of

Milan about 1820. From time to time the mordant voice of Beyle dominates the hubbub of these impassioned discussions.

As he wrote the successive chapters of his book he submitted his manuscript to the approbation of friends so that they might correct the "errors of fact" into which he often fell "like La Fontaine's astrologer who tumbled into a well while gazing at the stars." And he renders account of these suggestions and corrections. Somewhere he thanks the "Chevalier de Mirechoux, former Minister at Dresden," for valuable corrections made by the latter, and for acceptable and useful ideas which he had suggested. The dialogue which he writes at the head of his analysis of the *Barber* must have taken place often between him and the *dilettanti* whom he interrogates: "Come, let us get to work seriously. Let us open the score. I am going to play you the principal airs. Make a concise and sensible analysis."

They are quite exact and very neat, these analyses of Rossini's operas which Stendhal gives us. He makes no display of technical terms and does not consider that he has accounted for a piece in dissecting its grammatical structure. He seeks to give us in words an idea of the music, and complains of his inability to note down for us in simple fashion the musical motives of which he speaks, because he cannot let us hear them. This had not yet become the custom. Even when we feel that Stendhal is reproducing the ideas of others, he impresses his own stamp upon them and intermingles his analyses with reflections and digressions which forbid our being bored. He is something of a "Jacques, the fatalist" relating the tale of his *amours* to his master, subject to continual interruptions. In the end the analyses are finished and a charming impression remains. This absence of pedantry is not the meanest attraction of Stendhal's book.

We may find in the *Correspondence* judgments on Rossini's operas, which he has just heard, formulated in terms almost identical with those in *The Life of Rossini*. As to Rossini's style, however, Beyle is, in general, more severe in his letters than in his book. He seems to have made use of sketches of letters written in Italy. It is to be regretted that the manuscript of *The Life of Rossini* has disappeared. It must have bristled with passages pasted over and with inserts. To make a note at the head of Chapter 45 he simply pins to his manuscript a fragment of a letter, forgetting that a passage in the second person sounds very strangely in that place:

In music, conversation or discussion never leads to anything beyond the necessary recitative; melodic song, the aria, is a new atmosphere for which one must have a feeling. Now, this feeling is very rare in France

south of the Loire. It is very common in Toulouse and in the Pyrenees. Do you remember the little rascals who sang beneath our windows at Pierrefite (on the road to Cauterets) and whom we called up to our rooms? Toulouse. . . .

The whole book is written with this nonchalance, often quite charming, this disdain for pompous phrases and emphatic common-places. Beyle explains himself boldly in the beginning of Chapter 83:

If I have had one constant care, it was to exaggerate nothing through style, and to avoid, above all, securing any effect by a succession of considerations or images of somewhat forced warmth, which would lead one to say at the end of the period: "There is a fine page!" In the first place, as I entered the field of literature very late in life, heaven had denied to me entirely the talent of decking out an idea and of exaggerating gracefully. Furthermore, there is nothing worse than exaggeration in the tender concerns of life.

Like Rossini's early operas, Stendhal's book is an improvisation. When he has once set up his canvas satisfactorily he "broiders" it with astonishing ease. At times his threads become tangled and the design appears no longer distinct; but just as one begins to believe that the work is irremediably spoiled, order is reëstablished, and an exquisite flower, of charming color and new form, blossoms out under the fairy fingers of the adroit workman. For Stendhal is infinitely adroit in spite of his continual awkwardness. To point out his inaccuracies, his repetitions and reiterations, would be to imitate those whom he derides for finding fault with Rossini's negligence. Of what consequence are the banal transitions, the rapid cadenzas, the curtailed developments, as long as the opera includes a dozen dazzling numbers written with verve and fine feeling? There is not a chapter in *The Life of Rossini* which does not produce some flower of thought, some turn of expression, which in itself alone is worth a whole volume of chastened and emasculated style.

Stendhal never creates the impression that he is forcing himself, but rather that he is indulging in play. He writes "to while away the morning," and the "trade of author" fills him with deep disgust. He writes what comes into his head, what he believes, without caring whether he runs counter to or offends the opinions of others. In fact, he takes pleasure in stirring up his own spirits. He does not plume himself on his impartiality. This may be a very fine quality for historians, but in the arts it is, "like reason in love, the portion of cold or feebly smitten hearts." He says what he thinks without the slightest faith in his own infallibility. He does

not pretend that his judgments are law. He thinks thus and so, but he is quite free to admit that others may have received a widely divergent impression of the same work. He asks only that they be sincere and that they refrain from simulating feelings which they do not experience. He agrees with the best grace in the world that he may have shown himself unjust to the operas in Rossini's second manner:

I myself am probably as much the dupe of my feelings as any of my predecessors, when I proclaim that the style of *Tancred* is the perfect union of antique melody with modern harmony. I am the dupe of a magician who afforded me the most lively pleasure in my early youth; and on the other hand, I am unjust to the *Thieving Magpie* and to *Othello*, which arouse feelings that are less sweet, less entrancing, but are more piquant and, perhaps, stronger.

One cannot picture a critic with more good faith than Stendhal, or less systematic. His perpetual contradictions give an amusing incoherence to his work. He loves Rossini, but with reservations. He has no great affection for the noisy Rossini of *The Thieving Magpie*. He prefers the *esprit*, the delicate charm, the grace and the waggishness of *The Italian in Algiers* or of *Tancred*. Above all he finds fault with the composer for having encroached on the prerogatives of the interpreter. In Italy Beyle was privileged to hear Velluti and two or three other singers who preserved the method and the tradition of *bel canto*. He was captivated. Surely, then, it makes little difference what music they sing. One forgets the composer and thinks only of the virtuoso who transfuses his soul into his song. Velluti with his voice, Paganini with his violin, Liszt on his piano, transfigure the themes which they take as a pretext for their sublime improvisations. Beyle was charmed by them, just as we would still be charmed today if such singers could be found; but Rossini complains that he no longer recognizes his own music. And then, every singer pretended to follow the example given by such high authority. The most mediocre prima donna embroidered with trills, figures and flourishes the air which fell to her, and of which shortly no substantial part remained. Rossini resigned himself to the inevitable, but saved what he could.

He himself wrote out the embellishments and demanded that his interpreters sing the airs as he had written them and not otherwise. Stendhal could not reconcile himself to this reform, and found that Rossini was in the wrong, even though he recognized the disadvantages for the art of music which resulted from the excessive liberties in which the virtuosos indulged to the point of abuse. Under the old system the interpreter was enabled to express the

subtlest shades of feeling of which his soul was capable at the moment when he appeared upon the stage. Now he was constrained to discover the feeling which the composer meant to convey, and hence he sang with less sensibility. Now, for Stendhal, sensibility was everything in music. "Good music is merely our emotion." Surely his is not a technical judgment. He feels a profound disdain for those who are interested only in the "physics of sounds." Music must call forth emotions in him, must arouse reveries. "Every work which lets me think of the music," he declares, "is mediocre for me."

With what authority, then, and—let us speak boldly—with what good sense, he justifies Rossini in the tricks which the composer sometimes plays the sacrosanct rules of the art. These rules, which hamper the genius of the artist, are idle, mathematical stuff, invented with more or less cleverness or imagination. Each of them must needs be submitted to the test of experience. The sure method, the impeccable logic of his master, Tracy, forbids his implicit belief in the value of rules. The Abbé Mattei, when Rossini requested him to explain the reason for his corrections, answered: "One ought to write thus!" Beyle rebels against this dogmatism in which he scents a mystification. "If one has the scandalous temerity to want to inquire into the justification of the rules, what will become of the self-importance and the vanity of the conservatory professors?" So much the worse for grammar, if an artist like Rossini offends against its laws. Stendhal has too intense a love and feeling for music to descend so low as to examine minutely its dismounted mechanism. Of what importance is the mechanism to him, when the sound that it produces alone moves him?

Few men were more sensitive than he to the *nuances* of musical expression. He takes pleasure in defining in words its intangible complexity. He discovers in music the passion which he himself has so subtly dissected: Love. On another occasion, in the book which he has devoted to the phenomena of "crystallization," Beyle was impelled to have recourse to quotations from airs by Mozart, by Cimarosa and by Rossini to portray more exactly a certain shade of sentiment. In analyzing Rossini's operas he continues his psychological work, and in order to enable us better to seize the sense of the music, he relates anecdotes which illustrate feelings like those expressed in the music. There is a close relationship between the book on *Love* and *The Life of Rossini*, and the theories formulated in the earlier work are illustrated and commented upon by means of musical illustrations in the latter.



In Stendhal's opinion, we can in no wise understand the music of Italy, if we do not render ourselves an exact account of the soil from which it is sprung. As he writes to a friend: "This species of froth which one calls the Fine Arts is the necessary product of a certain fermentation. To acquire a knowledge of the froth one must know the nature of the fermentation." Here we have, in fine, the whole theory of the influence of environment, so brilliantly formulated and exemplified in the systematic method of Taine.

Stendhal, in order to reveal to us the meaning of Rossini's music, or to be more exact, of Italian music in Rossini's time, outlines for us a picture of contemporary manners and morals, evoking with each page the memory of the manners of times past which have contributed to forming those of the present. There is no more lively element than this in Stendhal's book. To tell the truth, he often merely repeats what he has already said in *Rome, Naples and Italy*, but one has not the heart to complain of that. A delineation of this kind we find, for instance, in the account of the representation at Como of *Demetrius and Polybius*, which ranks among the finest pages in Stendhal.

Convinced that we cannot study the music of a people if we abstract from the land, the customs, the ideas, the passions of that people, he seeks to give a combined impression of the whole, and tries to make the French understand Italy through Rossini's music. The whole book is written with an eye to the French public for which it is intended. Beyle, faithful to his rôle of "*bon cosaque auxiliaire*," harrying the laggards of the column with his lance, seeks to excite the curiosity of his compatriots, and to arouse in them the desire to know more of this beautiful land of Italy where one lives and loves after another fashion than the French. Like all those who have lived long in a foreign land, he is enraged by the self-sufficiency and the complacent pride of those who have never travelled beyond Saint-Cloud, and who live in the firm belief that there is nothing under the sun which can compare with what is done in Paris. As Sainte-Beuve very aptly remarks, Stendhal addresses himself not so much to the public at large, as to the artists and above all to the critics, whom he urges "to get out of the academic circle, too narrowly French, and to become aware of what is going on outside."

In his disdain for the "patriotism of the antechamber" he hurls the truth at the heads of French musicians. Carried away by his ardor for the fight, he goes too far and at times becomes unjust; but who would have the heart to find fault with him for taking sides against Berton? His rebukes for the noisy orchestras, the expressionless and voiceless singers, seem only too well founded, if we

judge by what our ears suffer to this very day in our lyric theatres.

Stendhal does not confine himself to overwhelming with sarcasm the public of the *Feydeau* and the *Louvois*, with ears "lined with parchment." He never misses an opportunity to war upon the national vices, against the defects which, according to him, are French *par excellence*: vanity, the fear of ridicule, affectation, materialism in art. He exaggerates a great deal, but what an admirable preacher of idealism is this Epicurean! Noble souls cannot escape the infection of his enthusiasm. "I have read through *The Life of Rossini*," confesses Eugène Delacroix in the pages of his diary. "I saturated myself with it, and I did wrong. As a matter of fact, this Stendhal is an insolent fellow who is right with too much arrogance and, at times, reasons falsely!"

Certainly he reasons falsely, but often—and probably Delacroix understood him thus—it is just then that he is all the more right. And then, what luminous *aperçus*, what prophetic views of the future of the art! In particular, he predicts with astounding surety as early as 1824, the fusion in French grand opera of opposing æsthetic principles of Italian and German opera, a prophecy which was to be realized by Rossini five years later in his *Othello*:

These two great currents of opinion and varying sources of enjoyment, represented today by Rossini and Weber, will probably be blended to form but a single school, and their union, forever memorable, ought to take place under our very eyes, in this Paris, which in spite of the censors and the rigor of the times is more than ever the capital of Europe.

If we overlook certain whims, certain venturous strokes of the pen, we are struck by the justness of his judgments on the musicians of his day. No one, perhaps, has spoken with more tenderness or sensibility about Mozart. As for Rossini, one is astonished both by Beyle's criticisms and by his enthusiasms, for alas! who knows Rossini to-day? I mean the Rossini whom Stendhal loved, the author of *Tancred* and of *The Italian in Algiers*. It is very difficult to judge from the French adaptation of *Le Barbier de Séville* which we are offered at the *Opéra-Comique*; and how many are there who have really heard an Italian troupe in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*? Those who have taken the pains, or rather those who have had the pleasure of studying the operas of Rossini's youth, can only admire the stern equity of Stendhal's judgment:

Vivacious, light, piquant, never tiresome, rarely sublime, Rossini seems born expressly to throw mediocre minds into ecstasies. However, though far surpassed by Mozart in tender and melancholy situations,

and by Cimarosa in the comic or in the impassioned style, he is superior in vivacity, celerity, piquancy and all the effects derived from these qualities.

To some people this judgment will appear surprising. "What! Is this all that Stendhal finds to praise in a composer about whom he has been telling us in more than five hundred pages? 'Vivacious, light, piquant, never tiresome . . . ' Does an artist who is no more than this deserve our attention for so long a time?" To be never tiresome, this in itself is reason enough for Stendhal. If one cannot attain the sublime heights of Mozart or Beethoven, if one cannot dispense to men profound emotion or serene joy, then, to amuse them, to give them a pleasure which is more ready, more amiable, but which distracts them from the realities of daily life and transports them into the world of agreeable illusions, is in itself a great deal.

Our age has succumbed to the fascination of the imposing monuments erected by the Romantics. It finds it difficult to imagine that one can listen to music outside of the coffee-house in any other mood than that of receptive ecstasy; that one can enjoy cheerful or tender airs with lively pleasure, and talk or sip sherbets during unimportant recitatives. We listen to the *Barber* to-day as we do to *Parsifal*, religiously from beginning to end. How Stendhal would laugh, and what would he not say of these people who go to the opera as to a sermon!

To be sure, there is music which is nothing but a sublime prayer, which introduces us into mysterious sanctuaries; there is music which fills us with holy horror, which arouses in us delight, woe, superhuman joy; there is music which takes possession of us, carries us along, tosses us upon its irresistible flood and abandons us on the sandy shore, broken as one who recovers consciousness after a long swoon. But is there no place, then, for music of another kind, and is it necessary that the passionate admiration which it calls forth for artists, highly gifted but falling just short of genius, should still impose upon us for any length of time this host of honest, respectable works, proclaiming the highest ideals, but which we cannot hear without yawning? Stendhal teaches—and there are people who have taken his words to heart:

There is room for a less severe, a less dogmatic art. I pray you, gentlemen who compose, put aside this superannuated equipment of sonatas, fugues and canons. Do not persist in resuscitating a dead tongue. What is the use of writing Latin verses? That is good enough for the college. You are no longer, so far as I know, college students. Do not hypnotize yourselves with the contemplation of the past. Belong

to your own times. It is not given to every one to be born a giant. If Nature has not fashioned you thus, make your effort proportionate to your strength. In seeking to plunge men into ecstasies you risk putting them to sleep. Flee from boredom, pedantry, affectation. Life is hard, full of troubles. Aid men to escape them through the imagination. Ponder the example of Rossini who, feeling neither the strength nor the desire to take Destiny by the throat as Beethoven did, prefers to snap his fingers at her. His lusty laughter dissipates the shadows. We forget our misery, the emptiness of life, and we are transported into a world of illusion and delight, wherein, dusted over with golden light, entrancing phantoms are wafted into view.

*(Translated by Otis Kinsaid.)*

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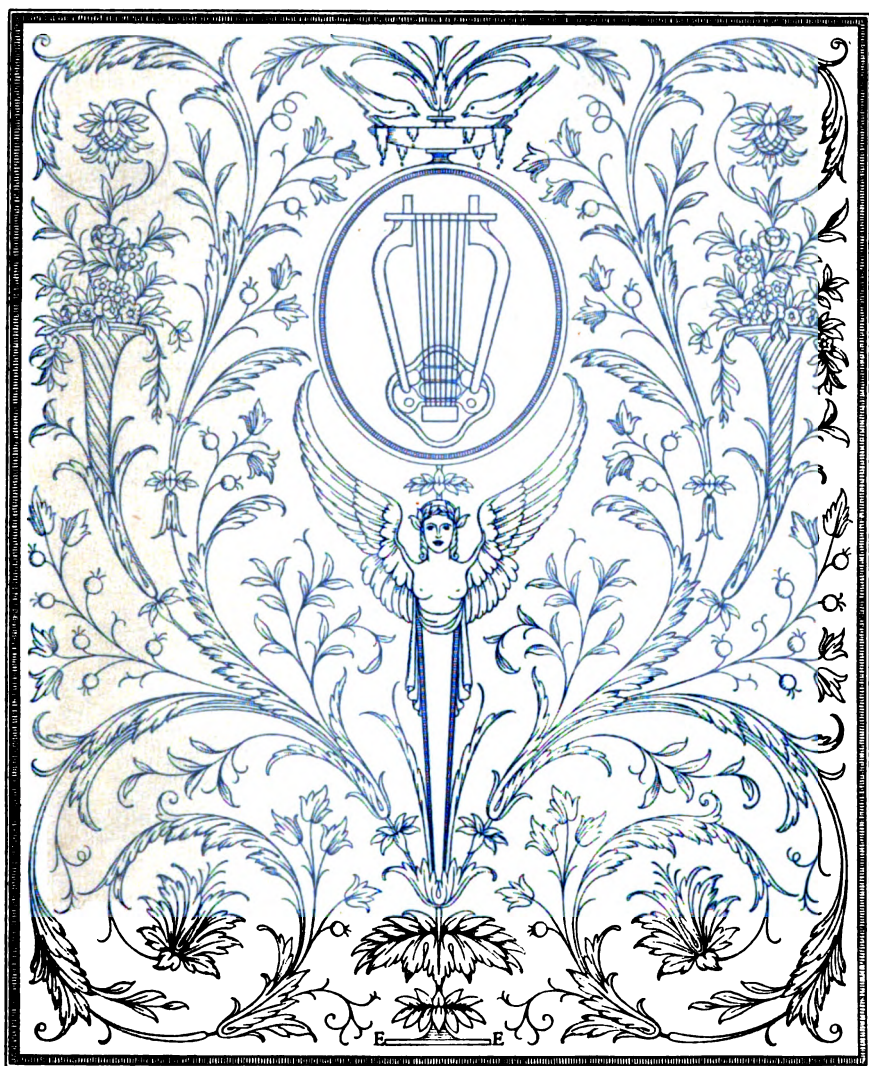
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**Address editorial communications to the editor,  
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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

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## THE RHETORIC OF MODERN MUSIC

By KARL H. ESCHMAN

**T**HE four elements of musical style: rhythm, melody, harmony, and form—have occupied at one time or another, positions of varying importance in the development of music. To the historian who is concerned with the process of development, these elements appear to have originated in the order named, although the critical theorist cannot at once agree with so simple an explanation, for he finds it difficult to conceive of any musical thought without its embodiment in material form. The theorist must also consider the other elements so interdependent as to justify the belief that melody lies inherent in what appears to be the most simple rhythmic combination, and that harmony is implied in any melodic succession whatever.

At certain periods, however, one or more of these elements predominate. Rhythm, thus, is the outstanding feature of primitive music, as simple melody worn smooth by usage characterizes folk-music; while "poly-melody" is the very definition of polyphony. The classical period is so named largely because of its emphasis upon formal structure, although the change to an harmonic point of view was also important. Following parallel movements in literature and politics, music broke away from the classic tradition and entered a romantic period, which has continued to the present day in Realism, Symbolism, Impressionism, and other contradicting, centrifugal resultants of emotional Romanticism. Rhythm, color, and harmony are in the foreground, although the order of importance may vary with individual composers. In the last forty years all three have grown more dissonant.

Some, who do not object to the title "Conservatives" at such a time as this, deplore the invasion of crass rhythm, barbaric



color, and crashing harmonic dissonance, whether brutally realistic or subtly impressionistic. They sincerely believe that the modern extremists are on the direct road to barbarism. Others who have unbounded faith in the new "Freedom," believe that the field of Art is unlimited and that nothing is useless as art-material just as nothing in the physical world is entirely useless. Accordingly, they have hope even in the music of the Italian noise-machines.

The critic of modern music is at once confronted by this problem of the materials of the art, the harmonic vocabulary, and the melodic idiom. There is also the interesting question of an amalgamation of the new material with the old. The impression of unpleasantness sometimes resulting from a sudden juxtaposition of the two, may be due to the fact that we are living in a period when the new is strange in its newness, or this impression may be the result of inherent differences in the two processes. The juxtaposition is nowhere more apparent than in the music of certain lesser composers of the present day, who seem to have decided to insert a few modern idioms in an otherwise mid-Victorian composition. However, we may admit all the newest words in music so long as some listeners, other than the composer, understand the language. More important than problems of vocabulary is the consideration of form and especially of what may be called rhetoric, in the music of to-day and of the future.

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After only a superficial survey of modern music, emphasis upon form seems unwarranted. That it is about the last element mentioned in a characterization of the period is due in part to the fact that design is most successful when inconspicuous and unobtrusive. It is also due to a narrow conception of the meaning of the term. When "form" is mentioned, most musicians think only of the formal and arbitrary arrangements of the classical period and certain extremely conservative tenets of Bussler and Prout which were successfully modified by later romanticists and are now fortunately and properly relegated to the past. The impression that rhetorical design is relatively unimportant in modern music is furthered by the fact that some composers are so interested in the vocabulary they are using as to be oblivious to style.

On the other hand, a careful investigation will prove that rhetorical form is much more important than most observers

realize, and that the greatest composers of the present period are experts in style. Contemporary composers likely to be earliest forgotten, are those who are interested only in the magic legerdemain of the new musical vocabulary and who neglect the construction of a real message. It is scarcely necessary to emphasize the fact that great music is the result of a coöperation of the four musical elements. A composer lacking in rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic interest is subject to immediate criticism, although at any given moment in a composition it is not likely that all these are of prime importance. However, the expression of form, the stylistic rhetoric of music, is continuously important. The danger that some modern music may fail at this point is greater than that it may fall into rhythmic or harmonic chaos.

The best music of the nineteenth century is music in which there was an amalgamation of harmony and polyphony. Similarly in the twentieth century, the greatest music will be written when the modern harmonic vocabulary, combined with engaging color and rhythmic interest, expresses ideas with all the force of rhetorical form (using the term "form," as we have come to use the term polyphony in its freest and best sense).

Regard for rhetorical structure does not confine the composer to any specific forms such as the "Sonata-form." This emphasis upon fixed designs has done much to prejudice the study of true form. Although the purity of outline of the classical sonata is admired and compared to the formal beauty of Greek sculpture, the modern composer and the modern sculptor are not expected to confine themselves to these rather impersonal and static forms.

The Classical School, with its balanced phrases and emphasized cadential endings, wrote beautiful musical poetry, but to-day Scriabine and others have written in a style which more nearly approximates that of prose. This does not excuse the latter from an examination of their rhetorical style; in fact, rhetoric is even more important in prose than in poetry, because of the greater freedom of prose. In this comparison of modern music and prose forms, there is no intention to refer to the emotional content of prose and verse. Much that is, from a formal standpoint, musical prose, is extremely poetic; just as Tagore's prose is poetic. Much poetry is prosaic. Mendelssohn at times delighted in the niceties of formal "irregularities in regularity" somewhat as Dryden did, and will be read less and less, for the same reason. Beethoven, like Milton, became more deeply philosophic in his poetic style than Strauss succeeded in becoming

in "Also Sprach Zarathustra." It is extremely important that present-day composers face this fact and realize that the greatest criticism of the modern school as a whole, is its lack of depth. Superficial ideas are often expressed with elaborate means, but all the richness of harmony and orchestral color does not prevent the listener from realizing that the composer has no message. Some would say that the new idiom does not lend itself to anything but half-tone impressionism. Surely this is not the case. Modern composers should be able to express themselves with greater force because of their increased resources of vocabulary, instrumental color, and rhythmic variety. Some of the Russians are already doing so.

The secret of such expression is inherent in a complete conquest of its rhetorical aspects. This technique is not to be used in a conscious or arbitrary manner but as an unconscious element in the fluency of expression, for form should ever be the servant and not the master of ideas. This fluency of expression is absolutely essential for any logical statement of musical ideas and it is a prerequisite for intelligibility. That it is lacking may account for the incoherency of some modern music, although it is difficult to say in all cases whether it is the intelligence of the critic or of the composer which is deficient.

Formal intelligibility does not necessarily demand regularity in structure. In fact, the listener much prefers the subtle and involved, so long as there is a conviction of sincerity of utterance and inherent, if not expressed, form. One of the main reasons why Bach seems a very modern composer is the fact that he found freedom of rhetoric in his style and that his sentence structure is quite involved and gives Messrs. Prout and Brethren more problems in their mathematics than any other composer they attempt to analyze.

Too much emphasis should not be placed upon a demand for plain intelligibility even, as some composers, like Debussy, prefer to veil the indistinct outlines of their form, and deal in that literary style in which half the charm is the lack of plain statement. There is more promise in music of the *vers libre* type than in poetry of that description (although no art can find its main thoroughfare in this direction), for music can approach with safety nearer to truth which cannot be intelligibly translated in verbal symbols. On the other hand, it is well to point out that in the biological world, the higher the organism, the greater is its organization and that animals with strongest vertebrate systems are most important. Of all the arts, music by the very

evanescent character of the medium itself needs careful organization in its structure.

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Two divisions may be made of the problems of rhetorical structure in music: one concerned with the large form of the work and the other, the detailed form of the smaller units, the concurrent discourse of the musical idea. In modern music the latter tends to become the more important consideration. Composers have discovered that the large form of a work may assume any structure consistent with the type and mood of the composition, if they keep in mind a few fundamental principles of æsthetics, unity and variety, proportion and development. They may then turn their musical thought in almost any direction, so long as they say something, i. e. so long as there is coherency in the rhetorical statement of ideas. The fixed mold of a large form is no longer needed. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, literary programs and designs, descriptive of external objects, have often been used in the place of the classical models but even programs are unnecessary. While literature and nature will always stimulate the imagination of composers, they need not be called upon to furnish substitutes for formal design. When this is fully realized, a true renaissance of absolute music *per se* will follow. That, after all, is the larger freedom. Many musical anarchists are hoping to find in program music an extreme realism. Why do they seek to be free of all harmonic and rhythmic restrictions only to enter a greater bondage!

The large form of his drama, in which musical themes are the sole protagonists, will be as free as the composer desires and its development will be limited only by the character of the ideas themselves. Nevertheless, it is always to be remembered that, however free in form his work may become, no composition can ever ultimately free itself from the necessity of form, because form will continue to be the penalty which everything must pay for the privilege of existing. The composer may manipulate the *dramatis personæ* in a musical plot as he pleases. His principal characters need not always be introduced at the opening of the work as they are in Sonata-form. The heroine, frequently the second theme of this form, need not be awaited expectantly at the closing pedal-point of a bridge-passage, with all the other characters on the stage looking toward her entrance. Stereotyped procedure of this sort may secure the expected applause in some theatres but it should not be a convention required in all

symphonies. There is no reason why the general atmosphere of the work should not be suggested by a long dialogue of secondary ideas or by an impressionistic scenic setting before any musical idea emerges in a principal rôle. Or even, as in G. B. Shaw, there may be no hero or heroine. Sometimes, the musical idea is gradually revealed in its true character and the work concludes with an apotheosis. There is much to be said in favor of saving the musical climax for the very end rather than placing it at the theoretically correct point, both in the classic literary drama and the musical symphony—at the end of the third act of five (i. e. at the end of Development and beginning of Recapitulation). Drama long ago, recognized this liberty and the necessity for metamorphosis and interaction among the characters until the final curtain, a fact which the recapitulation of the old sonata-form forgets. The “live-happily-ever-after” idea of a recapitulation with both themes in the tonic key, is rapidly giving place to more artistic and less stereotyped arrangements. In all of these matters, the composer should have complete freedom, consistent with his own idea.

The more important part of modern rhetorical style is the detailed consideration of “sentence” structure. This is inherently connected with the musical idea itself; one can scarcely say which is form and which idea: hence, its importance. At the present time with Rousseauistic philosophy rampant, any emphasis upon structure calls forth condemnation from those who believe that the “Inner Check” is of the Devil, that Decorum is responsible for all the sins of art, and Society for all the sins of the individual. Musicians of this belief will say that the theorist is, of course, quite willing to grant the composer harmonic freedom and even freedom in the large form, so long as he can fasten the servitude of sentence structure upon him.

It is the province of criticism in art or politics, to search for the Law that is higher than all laws. A recognition of the fallibility of human law and of the tendency of forms to become formalistic, does not imply the giving up of all standards and a return to chaos. The old idea of sentence-structure must be recast. Much of it comes from the days when music had more the rhythms of poetry than of prose, in which harmonic and melodic cadences had almost the effect of rhyme and when balance of phrases approximated verse-form. Some composers will continue to write in this style, in the future as in the past, but others have discarded this type of musical sentence, believing that there is no practical or theoretical reason why a musical thought, cast

in a musical sentence, should always close with an accepted dominant-tonic cadence. Many modern full closes are purely melodic or the feeling of weight is produced by other harmonic means, and these periodic closes are just as satisfactory. Musical punctuation does not depend upon harmonic cadences of a fixed pattern. It is indeed convenient in studying the music of some periods, to call a half-cadence a semi-colon or comma; a full cadence, a period; and interrupted or deceptive cadences, exclamation points, interrogation marks or dashes; but these same effects have been achieved in modern music in many other ways and just as unmistakably and successfully.

Again, the composer must bear in mind that, although there is no longer any need of harmonic cadences, he is not freed from all considerations of structure. Music must be just as intelligible a language and capable of just as much declamation as before, with even greater art. The performer cannot merely repeat words endlessly; he must punctuate and read into the music, the ideas of the composer. Therefore, a coherent rhetorical style is an essential, and more important to-day than ever. To prove that, in the work of great composers of the present, this rhetorical style is highly developed; that it is frequently lacking in others; and, in general, to analyze its processes, is an important field of investigation for the student of modern music.

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When an attempt is made to isolate the form of a composition and consider it apart from the spiritual content of music, the protest is often heard that cruel vivisection is being practiced; but it is only by some such laboratory method as this, that elements can be isolated and studied. Convenience, also, is the only excuse for the use of numerals as symbols. Those who oppose any systematic study of the subject are fond of pointing out the mathematical contradictions of certain theorists. That there have been differences of opinion in details of form, is no criticism of the study in general; rather is it to be expected in any consideration of the intricate structure of music. In the few examples which follow, other analyses may be held equally valid in detail. These are cited not in an attempt to cover the wide field suggested in the preceding paragraph, but as illustrating some features of sentence structure.

An interesting case of extremely elaborate rhythmic and harmonic material, coupled with extreme simplicity (one might

almost say, poverty) of form, may be considered in the analysis of Ornstein's small piano pieces "Poems of 1917." The adjective "small" is properly applied, for, gigantic technically, as has been the attempt to depict phases of the world-war in music, these pieces are all on small canvases and quite innocently regular in form. Hardly anything but regular four-measure phrases can be found from one end of the set to the other.

- I. Introductory 2.  
 A Thesis 4: arsis 3 (producing effect of 4 by addition of a fermata).  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 A Same form as before.
- II. A Thesis of two trimeters concluded by arsis of quatrimeter.  
 The composer adds two measures to produce complete balance 6:6.  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 B 4:4  
 A Same as before.
- III. A 4:4  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 A 4 quasi coda.
- IV. A 4:4  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8 (cumulative extension but no real rhythmic irregularity).  
 A 4:4 Extended as above to 6 measures.
- V. Introductory 4.  
 A 4  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4 (condensed to 3 measures).  
 Concluding 4.
- VI. A 4:4:4 (triple sentence).  
 B 4:4 (last measure extended by regular means, 2 measures).  
 A 4:4:2 (final quatrimeter suggested by a diameter).
- VII. A 4:4 (continued one measure).  
 B 4:4:4  
 A 4 (continued two measures).
- VIII. A 4:4 (cumulative extension of two measures)  
 B 4:4  
 Interlude 2  
 C 4:4 (extended three measures)  
 C<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 Interlude 1  
 C 4 (extended one measure)  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 4:4
- IX. Introductory 5 measures.  
 Introductory accompaniment figure 2 measures.  
 A 4:4  
 A<sup>x</sup> 4:4  
 Concluding accompaniment figure 2 measures.

## X. Introductory 4

A 4:4

A<sup>x</sup> 4:4A<sup>xx</sup> 4:4

Interlude 4

A 4:4

Coda 4:4 (with 2 measures regular extension).

Number eight of the set, which depicts actual warfare, appears to exhibit greater irregularity, but this is in content rather than in form. The formal digressions from regular quatrimeters are, in the main, repetitions of final measures to give the necessary periodic effect, formerly produced by harmonic means. So strong is Mr. Ornstein's feeling for regularity that he properly adds one measure of rest at the end of this number. If one still chooses to mean by "form," stereotyped regularity, it can be found here in greater frequency, perhaps, than in the compositions of Mozart. Toward this fact, the observer may take one of two attitudes: either this music is to be praised for its "purity" of form, or one may deplore the lack of rhetorical interest and wish that the composer had treated the involved subject of a world-war in less rigid musical phrases. One is inclined to miss, for instance, the surging rhetoric of the Chopin Preludes to which these compositions bear some resemblance. This is not intended as a criticism of melodic or harmonic material, in which there is much to interest the listener and to which he may turn his entire attention, probably as Mr. Ornstein intended he should.

Of greater interest from the rhetorical standpoint, are many of Cyril Scott's compositions, notably his Sonata for Pianoforte. They are illustrative also of a skillful use of new methods of punctuation other than the simple repetition or extension of a final measure for periodic effect, noticed in Ornstein. Scott's "Garden of Soul-Sympathy" is quite clear in form although it changes time-signatures in almost every measure and is more subtly irregular than Mr. Ornstein's set.<sup>1</sup>

The ten Pianoforte Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin constitute an excellent illustration of the development of newer methods of

<sup>1</sup>The first eight measures are in delicately balanced structure. Then follows a complementary phrase of the form 1, 2, 2, 3, 4 and three measures of cadenza-like material concluded by three of changing harmonies. Bar lines are as much a hindrance in the analysis of Scott as they evidently were in the composition itself. For instance, these last three measures have the "weight" of two, as does also the "cadenza." This closes the first section, A. Now a contrasted theme, B, in regular 8-measure outline. Then B reappears in 3/8 time—regular, if we consider one measure of 6/8 inserted as two of 3/8. The final A is interesting as it shows more of the growth which gives interest to rhetoric. The last two measures are twice repeated with changing harmonies and then the final measure itself, still changing color, is repeated three times and a snatch of B brings the number to a close.



sentence structure and punctuation. The first three Sonatas, written somewhat in the style of Brahms, Chopin and Schumann, respectively, are orthodox in structure. In the fourth Sonata, a change has been made to a newer harmonic vocabulary but each sentence still ends with the dominant-tonic cadence, though this is often disguised by appoggiaturas, suspensions and over-lapping. In the fifth Sonata not a single sentence ends with a full cadence. The impression of conclusion upon the main tonality, however, is usually produced in this sonata and in those immediately following, by the use of a part of the tonic harmony with added notes. Gradually, with increased daring and the growth of his vocabulary, the methods of sentence structure and punctuation become much freer and more varied. Even in the last Sonatas, however, not only the large form but also the detailed rhetoric is extremely clear and in the main surprisingly regular.

An analysis of the methods by which Scriabin and other modern composers achieve this clarity of form and coherency of rhetoric would involve detailed treatment at some length, but an investigation of the form of the best modern music, with a consideration of the newer rhetoric, should answer any criticism on that score. Rhetoric is only a means to an end, however, and modern composers have yet to convince many that they have a message of lasting worth. While the theorist must acknowledge the relative unimportance of form in itself, yet it is difficult to think of form apart from content, and an eloquent and forceful rhythmic rhetoric should free and inspire expression.

# OUR FOLK-MUSIC AND ITS PROBABLE IMPRESS ON AMERICAN MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

CASUAL REMARKS BY WAY OF SURVEY

By JOHN TASKER HOWARD, Jr.

**T**O prophesy is more than a pastime with man; it is almost his bread and butter. Whether it be the result of the next election, the probable date of the next war, or even such an every-day topic as the weather, every one feels that he must air his views regarding the outcome. It is therefore not in the least surprising that many of our eminent musicologists should make conjectures as to the future of our national music, and it also is no small wonder that their views should largely differ as to the influence our folk-music will bring to bear.

In the first place, we are not as yet agreed as to what is really American in this folk-music of ours. We know that the Africans, for instance, are a musical race; but how much of the American Negro's song is African and how much of it is imitation of the white man is another matter. Some of us are not as yet agreed as to who are Americans. A writer has told us that in a foreign district of one of our large cities a social worker once visited a public school classroom and questioned the children upon their various nationalities. He asked all the Bohemian children to raise their hands. Quite a number responded, and he went on through the list of Russians, Polish, Armenians, Italians, and the rest. Finally he asked for the Americans, and one little Negro girl raised her hand.

Are we to infer that the Negro is the only true American? We trust not, but there are those who say that because the black man came to our shores unwillingly, and since he himself can remember no ancestry of other than American birth, his claim to the only real Americanism is well founded. These same people will further hold that even the American Indians are not indigenous to the soil, for since they probably migrated from Asia to America *via* Alaska, they are no more native Americans than the Pilgrim Fathers.

It is indeed an unhappy state of affairs if none of us are Americans. But we know that such statements are not to be taken

seriously, and we are coming to recognize that American folk-music consists of those songs which reflect the temper and the habits and customs of the people in various sections of the country. That there will be some impress on the music of the future is undoubted, but it is not easy to determine just what that influence will be.

It is not probable that the impress of the Indian music will be strongly felt. The race itself is dying out, and the exotic flavor of their wild songs and dances is too far removed from the comprehension of the rest of us to ever become vital to our artistic expression. The war dance of the Red Man, his pagan worship songs are too much a part of him to become a part of us, and although many of the Indian melodies and modal idiosyncrasies have been woven into fascinating and interesting compositions of larger dimensions, it does not seem possible that such use will ever become general among American composers.

The music of the American Negro, as we know it, is nearer to us and closer to our own conception of musical expression. The Negro has been more among us than has the Indian, and although the racial distinction has been strongly emphasized, the black people have not been put on reservations by themselves. By intermingling, our musical expressions have found common ground. Whether the melodic outbursts of the African ancestors would have been more comprehensible than those of the Indians is a mooted question, but the combination of what the Negro brought with him, and what he has picked up from us is quite within our understanding.

As for the Negro songs and their relation to a characteristic American school of composition we have many divisions of opinion. We find those who hold that the Negro's musical message lies in his own harmonic sense, inherited from the Africans, and that his part-singing and spontaneous feeling for chords will find its way into the American idiom of to-morrow. Immediately the other side jumps to arms, and answers that the improvised harmonies of the Negro were acquired from the itinerant revivalists who travelled through the South, and that the black man's chords are nothing more than the banal "barber shops" of the college boys' glee club and quartette.

There are those who claim that the spiritual nature of the Negro's song is its greatest message, and at the same time we are told by the other side that this spiritual message is not really religious, as the educated and enlightened understand religion, but that the Black Man knows naught but superstition, and an intense fear of the inevitable. These thinkers would have us believe that the great value of Negro music lies in its pagan element, and that its primitive,

almost barbaric characteristics are its greatest contribution to the American art of the future.

But whatever earmarks an American school of music may acquire in the future, of this we are certain—its attributes must be true to the American people. At present the great majority of American composers are following the steps of various foreign schools. The French idiom has many admirers in this country, and there are those who emulate the Russian. It might almost seem that because of our cosmopolitanism we would always have an assortment of idioms, for those who claim that at present there is no American people speak with a measure of truth. None can deny, however, that we are slowly becoming an American people, and that the day is coming, far distant though it be, when we shall be a distinct race with characteristics, and, it may be, peculiarities.

The fire under the melting pot is hot, and despite the attempts of radicals and agitators to cool it, its heat is slowly but surely amalgamating us all into a race with our own traditions and customs. We shall never have those picturesque customs peculiar to people who have been isolated and whose communication with the outer world has been limited, but is it not entirely possible that the customs developed in the day of progress and science will seem fully as picturesque to our descendants a few generations hence? In the days when air travel is commonplace, the Twentieth Century Limited will very likely be considered every bit as romantic as the stage coach, and when we have our automatic telephones the telephone operator will seem quaint and a relic of the days of courtesy.

Even at this early stage of our development we who would call ourselves Americans have some temperamental qualities quite distinct and peculiar to ourselves. Our foreign neighbors remark on our resourcefulness, our energy, our restlessness, and we pride ourselves on our idealism. The "always in a hurry" spirit is undeniably peculiar to the American business man. Should such attributes prove permanently to belong to the average American, it is logical to believe that American music will reflect them fully as much as will our literature.

We have learned that composers who represent the national schools of other countries frequently draw upon the folk-tunes of their people for their rhythmic and melodic material. We are not in an analogous position to these composers, for we must remember that the same blood flows in their veins that flows in the peasants who sing the songs. Few of us have Negro or Indian blood in our veins, and it is not pleasant to think that they prophesy correctly

who say that the workings of the melting pot will eventually join us with races of another color.

We find, therefore, that the great majority of us are merely the audience as far as American folk-songs are concerned, and that the greater part of our folk-tunes really belong to only certain portions of our population with whom we never wish to be joined by ties of blood. The songs of the Kentucky mountaineers are American by residence only, and their unaltered British origin keeps them from ever becoming truly American. This is my personal opinion. On the other hand, some prominent authorities hold that whatever folk-songs of the many European races or nationalities which make up the American nation, have survived the transplantation on American soil, are legitimately to be considered as forming part of the body of American folk-music.

There are, however, certain elements of the Negro music that have had such a strong influence on us that we have taken them to ourselves. The songs of Stephen C. Foster, a white man, breathe the plantation atmosphere so vividly that the uninformed commonly think of "Old Black Joe," and his other melodies as real Negro songs. These songs were undoubtedly suggested by hearing the Negroes sing songs of their own; hence their Southern flavor, in spite of which the American people from North, East and West have joined the South in making them national.

The popular song of the day is already Negroid, and dance music and various forms of the "rag time" of the music-hall are directly taken from the Black Man. Syncopation has found its way into music of the better sort, and composers have found how fascinating and useful it is in expressing their thoughts.

This syncopation, restless and frenzied as it can become, seems at times to express the very pulse of our American life. There are few of us indeed who can resist shuffling our feet to some of the most commonplace dance-tunes, so captivating is the rhythm. Is it possible that the discordant shriekings of the "jazz" bespeak the feverish American energy? It is well that we may take comfort in the fact that Time is intolerant of the unworthy, and that the trashy elements of such music will be short-lived. But we may rest assured that whatever reflects us truly in our dance-hall music will have a place in our music of the future. From this there is no escape.

On the other hand, what will express our idealism, for American ideals are fast becoming traditional? Is there any quality of the plantation melodies or the Negro spirituals which will tell musical ears of these nobler qualities? Did Dvořák show us the way when he wrote the "New World" symphony?

Time alone will answer these questions. There are, without doubt, contributions from these folk-tunes that will leave their mark on the worthy American music of the future, and many are the prophecies. Would that we could be alive a few centuries hence to see who prophecies aright!

# NATIONAL MUSIC AND THE FOLK-SONG

By SYDNEY GREW

## I

CONFLICTING views are held universally on the matter of nationalism in music. One body of musicians declares that *nationalism in music* represents a contradiction in terms and that the "national" composer does not and cannot exist. Another body declares that "nationalism" is the beginning and the end of music, and that if a composer is not deliberately and intentionally "national" he can never be a great composer.

Involved in this matter is the subject of folk-music. The nationalist says that British folk-music must be made the basis of British art (i.e., symphonic) music. He says that the composer must consciously and deliberately adapt folk-music to artistic ends, that he must write in the folk-song idiom, and that he must indeed imitate folk-music to the end that his music may acquire "national" characteristics. The nationalist claims that we must reject foreign music or at least refuse to be influenced creatively by foreign ideals. The anti-nationalist says exactly the opposite.

I believe that there is a two-fold cause for these differences of opinion—first, that the nationalist does not think sufficiently far forward or the anti-nationalist sufficiently far backward, and secondly, that neither body of musicians has an adequate idea of the nature of music, of its rise, growth, and ultimate development. I consider that each body misreads musical history, the nationalist recent history and the anti-nationalist history in general.

I try to show in the following pages that the truth of the matter lies midway between these two extremes of opinion, and that both bodies are about equally right and wrong. I try to show that music is formed as a nation itself is formed, and that just as a nation has "national" characteristics so music has the same. Also I try to show that there is a certain fundamental difference between folk-music and art-music, and that British folk-music is not exactly the same as the folk-music of other nations.

The anti-nationalist stresses an argument that, to my mind, has little natural force. The argument is, that since a composer cannot express the whole of his race, and since, again, he cannot help but express in his music features and attributes common to all humanity, the composer is at one and the same time both less and more than national, and so is not national. (This idea of an exact balancing of qualities, declared by the anti-nation-

alist to be necessary in the establishing of "nationalism" in music, is humorous.)<sup>1</sup>

If such argument were of value, a stop would be put to our calling anything at all "national." It would put a stop to our use of terms of definition in general. We could no longer say that Bach for example was the great "Protestant" composer or that Dante was the great culminating mediaeval poet. It is no doubt true that the national composer does not represent every one of the many moods and emotions characteristic of his nation; but it is still more true that he represents all that matters. He represents the permanencies, the vitalities that live as long as his nation. He represents in selective synthesis all that distinguishes his nation from other nations. What he does not represent is the local, the transient, the superficial, the false, and the inartistic. I observe that the anti-nationalist does not specify the national qualities which are absent from such composers as Elgar the Englishman, Sibelius the Finn, and Dvořák the Bohemian. I have not seen it noted what essential mediaeval thought and feeling is omitted from the art of Dante or what essential German Protestant emotion is unrepresented in the music of Bach. I consider therefore that this particular argument of the anti-nationalist goes for nothing.

But the nationalist in his turn puts forward a proposition that to my mind is quite dangerously fallacious. It is the proposition that music must be made exclusively "national"—that the composer must take thought to represent national traits and characteristics and to represent these only. The nationalist bases his proposition on the assumption that music can be differentiated nation from nation to the degree that the nations themselves are differentiated.

It is here that he turns to folk-music; asserting that since folk-music is exclusively and recognizably national, it has the seminal power to generate art-music and the power further to nourish art-music to full growth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I showed that while no composer can be "national" (in the sense in which this word is always used by the "nationalists") because no composer can hope to express the thousand different mental worlds that make up the life and culture of any nation in any given generation, a score of different composers can still be British, let us say, in that each of them may express a phase of life that is distinctly British.—*Ernest Newman*.

<sup>2</sup>(a) We have a wonderful example of a nation deliberately and self-consciously putting aside foreign elements in music. I suppose no music to-day is more thoroughly national than that of Russia. This is because that brilliant group known as "The Five" set themselves to found a national school of music in the idiom of Russian folk-song.—*Martin Shaw*.

(b) It seems to me that a nation's music must be based on its folk-song. Where folk-music has been the inspiration, music has retained its individuality in a very much larger degree than in countries where it has been neglected.—*C. H. Moody*. To assert that English music can arise only by a composer absorbing into his tissues the folk-song genre of expression is to assert a monstrous fallacy.—*Ernest Newman*.



The nationalist advocates two elements that in art are impossible—isolation and self-consciousness.<sup>1</sup> He strives to deflect nature. He tries to arrest at a certain point the great instinctive force which brought his nation into being and established the national character. He asks for thought to be restricted and for feeling to be subjectivised, for the general and universal to be cut off and made local. He forgets that extreme nationalism, like extreme individualism, is a hermit-like withdrawal that stunts the imaginative faculty and weakens creative power. He forgets that when a nation or an individual has refused external, neighbourly influence, that individual or nation has ceased to produce art, particularly symphonic musical art, for the reason that we live, not by nationality or by individuality alone, but by the large and general world of which we form part. Isolation is as death. Self-consciousness is as a manufactured peculiarity.

Prussia teaches us the lesson as to the effect on music of extreme nationalism. Not one of the great German composers is a Prussian, though several of the more important German critics, theorists, and musicologists are Prussians. And the Russian "Five" teach us that even the most deliberate attempt to be national in music is not to be effected by a policy of rejection. Balakirew, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Cui, Moussorgsky, and Borodine studied Bach and Beethoven as thoroughly as they studied Russian folk-music. They kept themselves well-informed as to modern European music. They knew their Brahms and Wagner and their French contemporaries. Their larger symphonic music is great according to the degree of its agreement with the general musical spirit.

A deliberately restricted school of symphonic composition rarely lasts beyond a single generation. I can call to mind no symphonic work in the folk-song genre that has the vitality of an operatic pot-pourri or a Strauss waltz. Such a piece in England scarcely survives a dozen performances.

Thus it would seem that the nationalist misunderstands the value of the nationalist genius in musical composition. Yet it would seem also that the anti-nationalist underrates its value.<sup>2</sup> I consider that the idea of nationality is not generally understood in so far as it relates to music.

<sup>1</sup>I think a country's first duty is to be national, in music as in everything else. It will be time enough to talk of being international when English people have learned to be as interested in their own composers and executants as they are in those of other countries, and when our composers have learned the trick of translating into music scenes and emotions typically English.—*Hamilton Harty*.

<sup>2</sup>. . . "race" generally counts for much less in a nation's art and literature than the cross-fertilisation that is always going on between the culture of one country and that of another.—*Ernest Newman*.

## II

The fact should perhaps be definitely asserted that in the strictest sense of the term a piece of music can be nationally characteristic—that it can so clearly represent the nation as to be recognizably English, Hungarian, Slavonic, and the like.

If then a piece of music may be national, the composer of the piece must be a national composer. His piece of music may be a piece which serves for a short time only, and under exceptional circumstances (as the "Tipperary" song of Jack Judge) or a piece which serves generation after generation and which is perceived by foreigners to be almost idiomatically representative of the nation (as Arne's "Rule Britannia"). It may be an original composition which represents one department only of the nation (as Dibdin's "Tom Bowling") or one which is so thoroughly charged with nationalistic instinct as to represent the entire nation and to make it dangerous in the eyes of the oppressors of that nation (as the "Finlandia" of Sibelius). It may on the other hand be an adaptation (as the "Lilliburlero" of Purcell, a song that helped materially to bring about the Revolution of 1688). Whatever the piece, its origin, or its significance, it is national music if it represents, serves, and satisfies the nation, and the composer of it is a national composer—he is the man in whom is most powerfully operative the national spirit, if only for an accidental moment of luck or inspiration.

In the nature of things it might appear impossible that a foreigner should create national music of the above clear type. Yet such is the universality of music that this has been done. Chiefly however, a foreigner can only "assimilate" the native idiom, as the Frenchman Berlioz in the case of the Hungarian "Rakoczy" March, and as the Austrian Schubert and the German Brahms in the case of Hungarian music in general. Speaking generally, national music is the product of a native: Sibelius could not have written the "Land of Hope and Glory" song or Elgar the tone-poem "Finlandia."

## III


As help to adequate understanding of the idea of nationality in respect of music, I mention a few general facts and theories, reminding my readers at the outset, however, that according to the view of the anti-nationalist there is no such thing as a national "type."

A national language is not an accident of place and circumstance. It is a logical outcome and an inevitable result of consistently operative forces. These forces are the national instinct, which gives the nation being and forms its character.

The difference between the English language and the German represents a difference between the national character of the two nations. The English people have by nature a national faculty to perceive essentials. They have a national desire for the perfect observation of the concrete and for the expression of exact shades of meaning. Hence the richness of their language in the matter of synonymous terms. By national instinct the English are poetically-minded. Their language is a perfect means of expressing emotionalized thought. The German people have a natural faculty to contemplate abstractions. They have a genius for metaphysical speculation (I am speaking of course with no eye on the 20th century). They have no equivalent desire for the objective expression under poetic inspiration of concrete ideas. Hence the poverty of their language in respect of synonymous terms and its intractability in the hands of the poet. Our mental character as a nation caused us to select and retain foreign terms. Our language is richly composite. The different mental character of the Germans has caused their language to remain homogeneous. But the national character of the Germans—the instinct to penetrate to the innermost heart of things, gave them a sense of depth and ultimate relativity. Hence the power of the German language to unify conceptions that are apparently dissociated and to flash out in a single sentence an exact image of the whole. (This power is akin to the peculiar power of music, the great and final art of synthesis.)

National ways of speech arise from the national instinct. The Englishman cannot master the Arabian guttural. The German cannot produce our hard and soft *th*. The Spaniard uses the *tch* sound, but he has no use for the associated *sh*. In the matter of verbal rhythm and accent, the French run with level emphasis to the end of the sentence. Where they stress syllables, such syllables are the ultimates. The English act differently. They throw the stress as far back from the end as is convenient, though under pressure of the national desire for objective clarity they generally accent the root-syllable of the larger compounds. The English place the key-word of an idea at the very beginning of a sentence, as in

*SWEET* are the *uses* of *adversity*

which converts such phrases into superbly poised anapests, the verbal parallel of the great musical anapest—

Certain moods are common to all thoughtful races. These are qualified by the national instinct. The result is manifested in the national art. By general consent the mood of melancholy, for

example, is held to appear in characteristic form according to the nationality of the artist. In Russian art melancholy has a morbid cast; it is egotistically pessimistic, the cause being the national tendency toward extreme self-analysis. In several aspects of French art melancholy becomes cynically pessimistic, the cause lying in the national regard for realism, which invariably leads to negation and denial. In English art melancholy has always been characterized by dignity and calmness. It has never been morbid or cynical. It has never been violent or abusive. The cause of this is our great faculty to see things objectively, particularly that thing which is ourself.

In the matter of sentimentality, the German is said to be tearful, the Englishman tenderly ironical, other races alternately passionate to the degree of wildness and languorous to the point of inertia.

In the matters of religion and philosophy, Luther could not have been formed by the Italian instinct or Savonarola by the German; Wesley and Swedenborg could not have been respectively Swedish and English; Carlyle (though not typically British—Whitman calls him "Gothic") and Jacques Thierry, two students of the French Revolution, very adequately betokened by various aspects the nations to which they belong.

Exceptions are but "instances of a law more refined." Many a German has a perfect English accent. The Silvestre Bonnard of Anatole France is a true, humorous idealist. Coleridge was seriously introspective (yet as an Englishman he found salvation in Chaucer: "His manly cheerfulness is especially delicious to me in my old age. How exquisitely tender he is, and yet how perfectly free from the least touch of sickly melancholy or morbid drooping!"). Tolstoy's ultimate optimism is of universal range.

The national character remains. The *average* man illustrates the type still. The anti-nationalist who declares the opposite is led constantly into contradictions. He himself cannot avoid compact synthetic generalizations;<sup>1</sup> and since these are the stock descriptive vocabulary of the nationalist, it seems to me that with his own hand he destroys what he has himself erected.

<sup>1</sup>(a) What is a "Latin?" (b) We need not waste any time in trying to explain the modern development of French music in terms of a "French" or "Latin" predisposition. (c) The Englishman, who is supposed by foreigners to be a serious, coldly calculating, phlegmatic creature, is really a lazy humorist who loves to turn the serious problems of life aside with a jest. (d) The French . . . are in fact a nation of realists. (e) The mood of profound discouragement that breathes through so much of Debussy's music is purely local. (f) Modern French music is plainly the product of purely French conditions. (g) The peculiarities of Russian prosody are accountable for much of the individuality of Russian melody . . . these peculiarities are quite unreplicable in English. (h) Let us brush aside the misleading theory of race and racial characteristics.—Ernest Newman.

## IV

Now all the various differences touched upon above manifest themselves in music and make music perceptibly "national" in character. The musician is aware of this by daily experience. The non-musician is able to perceive its possibility. As the mediaevalist Palestrina could not have written the nocturnes of the 19th century romanticist Chopin, so the Irishman who effected the little turn in the melody of the sixth line of the song "The Last Rose of Summer" could not have imagined the swift anapestic cadence of the Hungarian dance or its *alla zoppa* (amphibrachic) rhythm. No Frenchman could have imagined the brave joviality of "Down among the dead men." Beethoven could not have written the despairing close of the "Symphonie pathétique;" Tchaikowski could not have risen to the spiritually strong and joyous close of the "Sonata pathétique." The cause is the national instinct. The result is nationality in music.

We shall discover eventually that in certain respects music is more national than any other art. All art is revealing, and is therefore akin in spirit and manner to what it reveals; but music (the sum of the arts, approximation towards which results in perfection in other arts) is the most revealing of all. For music is the entirely spiritual art. It is the one art that is entirely creative. Other arts "produce change merely, not creation," as Browning says in "Charles Avison." This art is the direct representation of the soul; and it is by soul, not by mind, that a nation is distinguished and characterized. Its only companion in this respect is architecture.

Music appears late in the history of a nation and architecture early, partly for the reason that architecture is material in substance and music immaterial, but chiefly for the reason that where the spiritual emotion expressed in architecture is simple, perhaps elementary, that expressed in music is complex. Music and architecture are, however, the same at base, and the nation that has an architectural genius has also a potential musical genius. The former reveals national characteristics. The latter must do the same, but with less immediate obviousness.

The musical power in a nation remains latent until the national instinct is clarified, as if it were made locally active and concentrated upon the building up of exact and indubitable national characteristics. I will follow out this thought briefly in so far as it has reference to the particular subject in hand.

## V

The national instinct has stabilized itself. It has unified the various native elements. It has synthetized their powers and

brought them to bear on a direct issue—the individualizing and the characterizing of the nation. It has so worked upon the people that when looked on from a sufficient distance the nation appears of one colour, as a star does, or a field, or an old building. It has taken hold of whatever foreign elements were imposed upon the native and subjected them to the same synthesizing process, reducing the whole to a certain homogeneity. It has eliminated dialect and created language. It has made the language an alert and nervous means of expression. In this indeed it has first proved itself. For as the original step towards nationality was a move from tribal independence and antagonism towards national unity and mutual interests, so the first great mental manifestation of the change was the creation of an instrument for conveying general ideas and for expressing thought upon abstract matters—faculties which are absent from patois and dialect.

Previously to this successful operation of the national instinct, the people had a ballad-poetry. This may have been splendidly vigorous, but it was concerned with simple feeling and single ideas, never with pure thought and dual ideas. It was essentially folk-art. The nation now has an imaginative literature. It produces drama, also poetry that translates easily and directly into other national languages—the supreme demonstration that the national instinct is perfected and the nation on the way to that universality of understanding which is the ultimate goal of all humanity.

Previously again to this operation of the national instinct, the people had a form of music. This was akin to its ballad-poetry. It was, of course, folk-music, later in time than its poetic equivalent, yet much the same in nature—concrete, non-dual, restricted in significance to the elementary mind of the “folk” and for that reason the more obviously “national.” It was not akin to art-music. Its point of view was relative, not absolute; its interests were local, not universal.

The appearance of art-music in a nation is proof that the nation has achieved a fullness of being.<sup>1</sup> There was in the middle ages no pure and absolute art (in the sense modern usage gives to those terms) because the national instinct was inoperative. Except for England, Western Europe was intellectually and, in many ways emotionally, as one nation. There was one religion. Latin was the

<sup>1</sup>If music comes and goes in the course of time, it is because something happens at certain moments to disturb this fullness of being. A new addition to the mentality or spirituality of the race (or even a fresh accession of material interests) throws the race back to what (at least so far as music is concerned) forms inchoate primitiveness, out of which the race returns to elemental perfection again by a repetition of the synthesising process.

common language for art, science, and politics. Feudalism was the prevailing social condition. Gothic architecture became the general order. Music was a branch of mathematics, the companion of arithmetic and geometry, very beautiful at times, but impersonal in mood and utterly without national character—again with the exception of England.

As soon as the mediaeval peoples began to shape themselves into nations, all this was changed. National thought clarified itself. National languages were established. Imaginative literatures arose. Architecture began to take on national individuality. Music entered into its heritage. The superb mediaeval mind ceased to be no more than potentially music. With the dawn of modern nationality, and simultaneously with the rise of that objective ideal we call humanism, but aided not at all by the revival of classic paganism, music for the first time in recorded history became a warm and truly living art. It became spiritually emotionalized, representative at once of the individual composer and of the nation to which he belonged. (In a lengthy musical essay the statement might be proved by a comparison between the South German Froberger and the Italian Frescobaldi, still more by a comparison between the Englishman Wilbye and the German Schütz.) The national instinct had been stronger in England than on the continent between 1200 and 1600. The English were in consequence the great musical nation of those centuries. The famous rota "Sumer is icomin in" (c. 1250) is some two hundred years ahead of European music in the matter of technique. The very beautiful two-part song "Foweles in the frith" (c. 1270) is as emotional in its way as Bach and Beethoven. The Elizabethan composers are very nearly as "universal" in the way of music as is Shakespeare. Their music is equally "national." Music in England has risen or decayed according to the activity of the inner national instinct. Its folk-music arose chiefly between 1550 and 1650, as did that of most other European countries.

## VI

Music therefore depends on nationality and must express the same. Yet music of character is never deliberately or restrictedly national. It is never parochial. It is the modern art, identified with the chief feature of modernity—the feature, that is, of large, extra-national thought and feeling. It reflects the general move to a unity of spiritual interests. It is the common spiritual language, as a thousand years ago Latin was the common intellectual language. It can never confine itself to the national folk-music.

Nevertheless art-music is moulded by the forces that made the nation. It is coloured throughout (but coloured only) by the national instinct. It is marked by idiomatic peculiarities. It starts with, and it never discards even in such mighty universalists as Bach and Beethoven, what John Galsworthy has termed "the local atmosphere and flavor which is the background of true art."

The national character is in any country the root of the tree of art. The branches of the tree may touch the branches of other trees. It must breathe the common air. But the roots must remain in the national soil (though to make the circle complete, those roots may stretch underground until they interlock with other roots; and the ground they cling to is inseparably joined to all the other ground in the world).

## VII

The foregoing implies that since national character evinces itself in music, folk-music, in which that character finds exact representation, must enter into the composition of art-music. This is indeed the truth of the matter, but it is a different truth from that declared by the "nationalists." Art-music comes from folk-music: it does not stay with it, or go back to it. It cannot be supplanted by it.<sup>1</sup> For folk-music is a thing of restricted significance, as peculiar to time as to place. It loses value in its own country as the people of that country change and develop. It afflicts music with a sort of brogue. It presents a leaf where a fruit is needed—which is the point of the quarrel between our nationalists and anti-nationalists. Yet folk-music is necessary for art-music and it has always been present, whether the composer be a Bach or a Dvořák. I will justify this apparent paradox in a moment, when I have made clear the difference (difference amounting to antagonism) that exists between these two types of music.

## VIII

The difference between a folk-song or dance and a symphony is about as keen as the difference between the mediaeval telling of the story of King Arthur and Shakespeare's "Lear" or between an ordinary fairy-tale and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

In origin and intention folk-music represents the average simple man, the peasant, art-music the highly organized man, the man of modern complexity of mood who has returned by power of thought

<sup>1</sup>Burn pianos, stop concerts, teach folk-song (original and imitative) in schools and universities.—*Martin Shaw*.



to simple feeling again.<sup>1</sup> The one represents things as these affect the individual as a detached entity, the other represents them as they affect all men, the individual in this case being the synthesis and summary of his nation and of the whole human race. The folk-musician sings of and for himself. He is the complete lyricist. The other sings of and for all men. If he is a Palestrina or a Bach, his art is epical, if a Beethoven, it is dramatic. The folk-musician produces subjective art, the symphonic-musician objective. Folk-music is as nature, art-music is as Sir Thomas Browne's "art (that) is the perfection of nature."

Subjective art is false to any world or time but its own. An English folk-song of 1600 may be as meaningless to an Englishman of 1900 as to a Chinaman. It may be as unsuited for symphonic treatment as an Irish song may be for the dancing of the Hungarian gypsies. It can be forced into a foreign world only by an inversion of Nick Bottom's offer to make the lion roar as gently as any sucking dove. Only when a piece of folk-music has some quality of universality can it have value for other times and places, as the traditional setting of "O mistress mine," which moves us to-day as deeply as it did four hundred years ago and which would probably move men of any nationality. But this remark is of general application. It applies to the dead world of mediaeval music. Arcadelt's "Ave Maria" still inspires us, and Arcadelt was before Palestrina. Therefore when such subjective art as folk-music retains significance, it is because it is not subjective at all, but objective, i. e., general and impersonal, common to all men and all times.

Until we can go back in soul to the conditions which produced folk-music, that music in most cases is only a curiosity, to be read as with a glossary. And if we so go back we arrive at conditions where art-music is neither possible nor desired, folk-music itself affording all the music wanted.

I do not stay to labour the point that imitated folk-music is valueless. Music is creation, not imitation.

Thus folk-music and art-music are antagonistic, belonging to different mental and spiritual worlds.

## IX

It is only during the past hundred years that the folk-song problem has arisen and confused musical composition. The great masters worked wisely. They made of folk-music a means of

<sup>1</sup>"In (metrical) literature, as in social life, the progress is from lawless freedom, through tyranny, to freedom that is lawful." Watts Dunton, in "Poetry and the Renaissance of Wonder."

approach to the highway of pure music. The smaller men of the 19th century followed it into what now seems to be little more than *cul-de-sacs*. We English are already tired of the greater part of Russian music, as (for different reasons) we are tired of contemporary German and French music. With the common sense that we apply to our own errors we have as a nation consistently rejected the similar mistaken efforts of our own composers.

We have in England made a twin-error. We have first misunderstood the nature of music, both folk and symphonic, and we have secondly misunderstood the practices of the great and successful German masters—we have imagined that our folk-music was like theirs and that it could be passed in the same way into art-music.

The German composers up to Bach (1750) were helped by the circumstance that their national songs and dances had an objective character. The German folk-song is akin to pure music. It is large in mood and solid in style, choral in design and intention, and orthodox in form (i. e., in rhythm, sentence shape, and general structure). It is "harmonic," not "melodic" in effect, epical, not lyrical. The church chorales and the love-songs are almost equally collective in mood. They are quite equally choral in plan. These remarks apply also to the folk-dances.

Therefore in the first period of German music, folk-songs passed readily into art-forms. In fact, they created those forms. The Bach organ chorales are no more than idealized representations of Lutheran hymn-tunes, and these pieces are the flower of German music up to 1750.

The German composers after Bach (1750-1825) had the same convenience. The change from Bach to Beethoven was very complete. It was from the deeply spiritual and intensely religious to the ardently human. The type of folk-music incorporated now into art-music was the peasant-dance, which—far more than the minuet, as is generally supposed—created the Beethoven scherzo, the head of this second phase of German music.

But another factor entered into German music with the passing of Bach—the factor of outside influence, the lesson of which is ignored by our present-day nationalists. German music by 1750 had exhausted the power of German folk-music of the type hitherto available. It required something fresh. This it found in the greater rhythmic movement of the folk-music of nations adjacent to Southern Germany. Haydn was a Croatian. Mozart lived in Austria. Beethoven went to Vienna almost as a youth. Schubert was Vienna born; he went further than the others and confirmed finally the symphonic borrowings from Hungarian folk-music.

After these three centuries of musical experience, wisdom was engrained in German composers. Even Schumann, introspective by nature, the prince of German romanticists, made no errors. He taught us what to do when in "Papillons" and "Carnival" he incorporated the old "Grossvater's Tanz." Brahms also made no errors, Richard Strauss the same, in whose "Till Eulenspiegel" is a touch of the folk-song spirit even more perfectly effected than the instance I have indicated from Schumann. Only the smaller German composers fell into error: Humperdinck's "Moorish Rhapsody" is as unsatisfying as Liszt's "Rhapsodie espagnole."

Now our English folk-music differs from German, Austrian, and Hungarian. It differs also from Bohemian, Swedish, Russian, and other types that have passed in one way and another into art-music. If it is to pass into our art-music, it must be by an entirely different process. It is utterly unsymphonic. It is monophonic, lyrical, lacking in passionate rhythm (I am of course speaking relatively), and has little of the genius that has made music in the past. If I am wrong in my opinion, I still ask where, after a full generation of "nationalistic" effort, are our equivalents of the fifty-one mazurkas of the Pole Chopin, the innumerable pieces of the Norwegian Grieg, the fifteen rhapsodies of the Hungarian Liszt, the twenty-one dances of the Hungarianized-German Brahms? The answer might indicate a few pieces by Percy Grainger and one or two other composers—ten or a dozen works still unproved by time against the many hundreds that have withstood from one to three generations! We have failed in this respect because of error. We have not failed because of lack of musical genius.

## X

I would not be taken as intimating that British folk-music cannot pass similarly into art-music. My belief is that it can and must so pass. But this will be by a process of assimilation, not of imitation or of deliberate adoption, still less by following the practices of foreign composers who have a different order of material with which to deal.

I think indeed that in some respects the salvation of art-music depends upon our native folk-music. The time is ripe for a new departure. The German genius is weary. It has been weary for forty years. The genius of other races is immature. That of France is non-musical; the only great French music is the product of the Belgian-French César Franck. The British genius is very nearly as promising for music as it was for drama in the early days

of Shakespeare. We have in Elgar the one great classically-minded composer of the present generation. And in our native folk-music we have as rich a material as Bach had, or Beethoven. Only it is not as theirs. Yet like theirs it must be assimilated, and left to create as theirs was its own pure and absolute forms.

The English capacity to adapt and assimilate is, I believe, the greatest in the world. We took many things belonging to poetry from Italy in the sixteenth century; and immediately evolved the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare and Milton, with its constantly varying feet and measures of ionics, epitrites, and choriambes, its suspended emphases, movable cæsura, and extended enjambment. We took Hebrew philosophy, history, and poetry, and after adapting not only our own prose and poetry, but even our very language, we produced the one perfect translation of the Bible,—perfect, I mean, in the way of absolute art. The English have unified the many racial elements of the nation more compactly than have other nations; the process is being repeated in the United States. But in nothing have we succeeded where conditions were determined abroad, or where circumstances had essentially a four-square metrical exactness of character. Always have we needed the freest plasticity of both material and pattern; and so we could not, by nature, and quite apart from other considerations, have done much with music during the period from before Haydn to Wagner. The lesson for English composers is that which Shakespeare learned,—to know your subject, absorb its material, and re-express it in its own form. This, I perceive, is about to be done in England.

Our composers will then be national. They will represent the nation. They will also be extra-national, representing the whole world. Every one of us may find himself in Shakespeare, Bach, and Beethoven. Who finds himself in the self-conscious music of our strict nationalists? I sometimes think as things are in this respect that it is our nationalists who are anti-national and our anti-nationalists who are most truly and sensibly national.

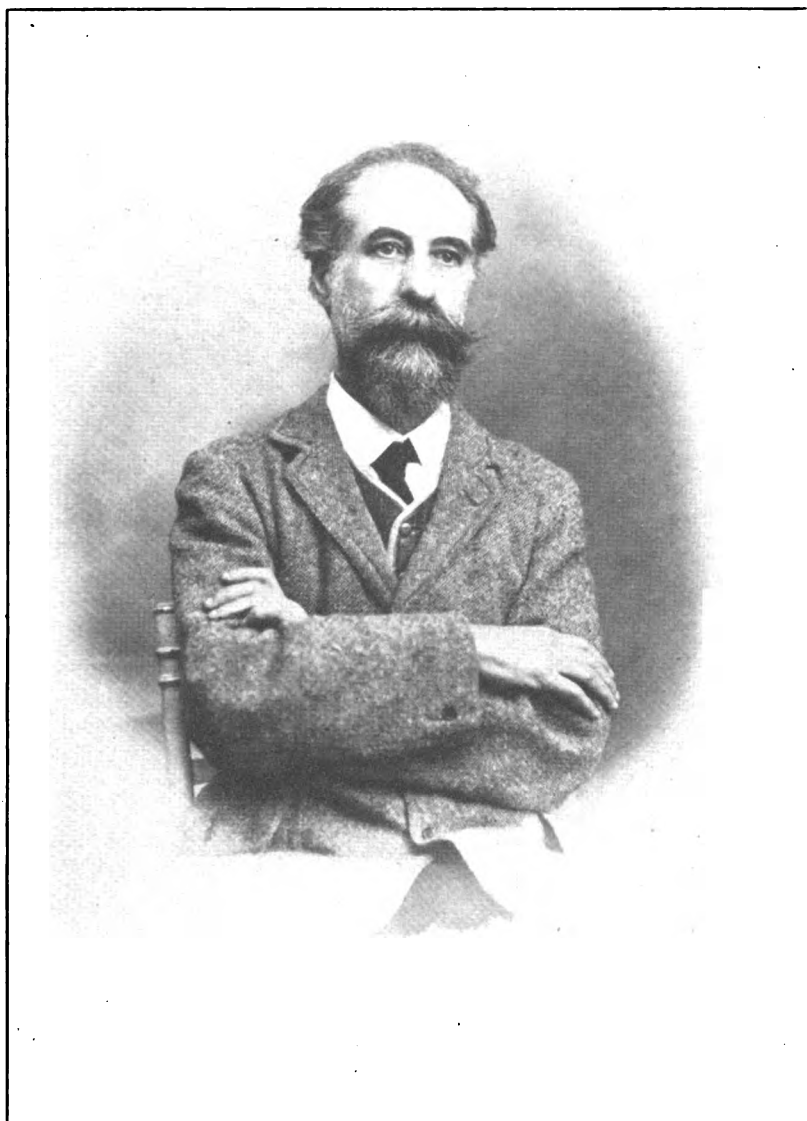
# THE SONGS OF CHARLES KOECHLIN

By E. H. C. OLIPHANT

THE race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but in the arts the struggle for reputation is apt to end in favor of the loudest. Ability may be lost sight of, if it be not accompanied by a flair for advertisement. It is to those who can best make themselves heard in the din of contending rivals for popularity or for fame that the prize is likely to be awarded, the public attitude being not infrequently that of a member of an Australian cricketing team which visited England. In this man's eyes everything he was shown was more than matched by something in his own home city, and the comment he made after hearing a performance by a famous cornetist was, "We've a far better player in Hobart. If they were both playing you wouldn't HEAR this man." So I am afraid that some people seeing the title of this paper may say, "Charles Koechlin? He can't be much good: we haven't heard of him." It is, after all, only very few who recognize the truth of Swinburne's saying that fame is but an accidental attribute of genius. Were it otherwise, the subject of this article would be known throughout the world of music as one of the rarest and finest geniuses of the time.

I am dealing here only with his work in song, meaning by "song" a composition for a single voice with an accompaniment by a single instrument. On this definition, Koechlin's published songs consist of one song without opus number, five contained in a first volume of "Rondels," six in a second, eight in a third, sixteen in a first *recueil*, fourteen in a second, and twelve in a third—a total of sixty-two.

To obtain an adequate idea of the mentality of any song-composer, one of the first things to be done is to take note of his choice of poems to set. If it be true that a man may be judged by the company he keeps, it is no less true that a composer may be judged by the poets whose work he selects for illustration. From this point of view there is assuredly no fault to be found with the subject of this article. Every one of the baker's dozen of poets on whose work he has drawn for his published songs is a poet of note. More than half of them—Bouilhet, Fernand Gregh, Sully-Prudhomme, Hérédia, Robert d'Humières, Paul Bourget, and (in a French translation) Rudyard Kipling—supply but a single poem



Charles Koechlin



each; and Andre Chénier, but two. The remainder may be described as his favorite poets—Edmond Haraucourt, with half a dozen songs; Verlaine, with seven; Leconte de Lisle, with nine; Albert Samain, with eleven; and Théodore de Banville, with twenty. The total of Verlaines and Samains has been increased in the unpublished fourth *recueil*, in which are also five songs by Pierre Louÿs, some Klingsors, a Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and a Claudel.

The list is significant. Of the two French poets who have been most favored by composers of class, Paul Verlaine is far from occupying with Koechlin the predominant position he holds with Debussy and Fauré and with others of less account; and Victor Hugo is ignored. Koechlin's list contains, in fact, the names of only two men whose poems have been largely set by other composers of rank; and neither of these two—Verlaine and Leconte—is represented by the songs by which he is most widely known. Verlaine's pre-eminent popularity with composers is shown by the frequency with which they have fastened on "Il pleure dans mon cœur," "Mandoline," "Le ciel est par-dessus le toit," "La lune blanche," "En sourdine," and "Chanson d'automne"; but the only one of these set by Koechlin is the first-named. Judging by what he has done, he has so little cause to dread comparisons that it does not seem likely that timidity affords the reason for his avoidance of songs frequently set by others. What is more probable is that, as a result of his very individual outlook, what appeals to Debussy, Duparc, Fauré, Ravel, Chausson, Bordes, Hahn, "Poldowski," and others does not appeal to him. That is, from one point of view, matter for regret; for there are few better tests of any composer than comparison with other composers in the treatment of the same poems.

When we look over the list of Koechlin's poets, we find the Pagan element strong. Samain, Leconte, Hérédia, Chénier, Banville, Haraucourt are all worshippers of the antique, all, in varying degrees and in varying ways, colorists, and all Greek in the flawlessness of their form. The poems chosen for musical illustration show Koechlin's fondness for vastness, for abysses of time and space, the dreadful, the unknowable; we see, too, a love of the old Pagan past when beauty was worshipped for its own sake, and a melancholy realization of the fact that it has gone, never to return. We see him now tragic, now playful, now fiercely barbaric; now treading a minuet with the grace of a courtier of the Grand Monarque; now glorying in the humid heat of a tropical forest; now looking across the sea at some phantom ship that never was and never will be; but his most characteristic moods are those in which he is obsessed by a sense of immensity and those in which he lives again a fancied life



in a dimly-remembered past. As to how his genius is suited by the several poets he has interpreted, that is a matter for subsequent consideration.

The first quality to be looked for in a song-composer is respect for the words he is seeking to clothe in sound. He must never sacrifice either the form or the lilt of the verse to his musical necessities: he must never set expediency above interpretative truth. He must avoid that fault so common in Rubinstein (whom one American critic most amazingly classes among the ten leading song-composers), the fault of supposing that words and phrases may be repeated *ad lib.* to suit the exigencies of his melodic line; and he must also avoid that fault of almost every English-speaking composer, the fault of treating the verse-rhythm as if it were something with which the musical rhythm need have no connection. From the first of these two faults Koechlin is almost entirely free, save in his treatment of the "Rondels" of Théodore de Banville. The rondel is an artificial form of verse, with repetitions provided for in certain specified places; but that fact does not warrant the composer in introducing repeats of his own—indeed, absolutely forbids his doing so. In the matter of accentuation I know no composer more careful than Koechlin. He fits his music to the words with a deftness of handling that is amazing. His sense of artistic fitness is almost unerring, and his rhythmic suppleness is extraordinary. In him the continuous changes of time-rhythm, so common in modern composers, are particularly marked; and some of his finest effects are got in this way.

It may be truly said of him that each of his songs has its own individuality, its own manner; yet the individuality of the man is over all, and one feels that, however the style may change, it is always his. In every song he strikes the right note almost infallibly; and not only is he correct in his general conception: he also illumines wonderfully for us words and phrases. He lays his foundation with care, and the most minute detail of his architecture receives the same thorough attention, with the result that every song is a finished work of art. His thoroughness is displayed in the re-writing to which most of his songs have been subjected; and his attention to detail, by the character of the instructions accompanying each song. Everything is thought out with the utmost care, and nothing is left to chance. The easy "a piacere" of the casual composer is not for him. He is too sincere, too genuinely artistic for such slipshod methods. He is a self-respecting artist, proud of his work, and not a professional purveyor of pot-boiling popularities. If the composer of that stamp is at the extreme of indifference, Koechlin is at the

other extreme of meticulous care in regard to the interpretation of his work, so that his instructions are very frequent, very minute, very exact. I know nothing of his methods of work beyond what I can learn from the evidence from his song-volumes, but I do not think I am wrong in judging him to be severely self-critical.

Unless I woefully overestimate him, he is a song-composer of an unequalled sense of largeness and greatness of design. That is where he differs from other great French composers and approaches Wagner. He is indeed musically a blend of French and German, as is not unfitting in one whose parents were Alsatians, though he himself was born in Paris and received there the whole of his musical education. He is usually ranked with the impressionists; but his impressionism is very different from that of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel. He is sometimes heavier-handed than they are wont to be (though nothing can exceed the lightness of his touch in songs where he deems lightness called for); but there is not one of his fellow-composers that is capable of his tremendous landscapes. They work on a small scale; he, on a large one.

Koechlin is an experimentalist, like every other great Frenchman: he is not content to accept and follow conventions; he prefers to make his own. In his later work the element of unexpectedness is continually obtruding itself: in fact, one feels at times as if he is seeking to give us the unexpected. He offers material of a wonderful richness of texture, with curious and original harmonies, strange progressions, and an ignoring of modulations in favor of dissonances and chords transported directly to unrelated planes, the key having at times a merely nominal existence. Often the melody is intimately fused with the accompaniment, melody and harmony being conceived as one. The shading is not always as delicate as it might be; but the harmonies are of extraordinary variety, and for that reason do not cloy, as Debussy's are apt to do. His accompaniments are elaborate in the extreme; and his work is of enormous difficulty—a fact which has doubtless stood in the way of its acceptance. Singers are apt to look askance at songs that call for such a combination of qualities as do many of these; and accompanists may be pardoned for declining accompaniments that demand the possession of three hands—in places, indeed, even four hands.

Koechlin has, of course, his mannerisms—*e. g.*, a fondness for triplets (and, in the accompaniment, for broken triplets) and for the tremolo, to which he is even readier to resort than Bantock is to resort to arpeggios. But his conventions, such as they are, are his own. His daring is without limit: he writes to please himself; and if the expression of his ideas be impossible of accomplishment without

an ignoring of traditional laws, he refuses to consider himself bound and promptly cuts himself free.

In the songs of Koechlin there is much more than skilful writing, much more than an inexhaustible wealth of harmony: there is an abundance of ideas. The composer invariably knows what he wants to say, and it is rarely that he does not succeed in saying it. His vastness of design sometimes goes beyond what seem to be the limits of a song; but his conception is ordinarily well sustained throughout, even when, in the excess of his pictorial quality, he becomes most kaleidoscopic. His work is interesting for both subject and treatment, for both its musical beauty and its intellectual stimulus. He may at first acquaintance strike one as affected; but the idea does not survive a study of his work. What he feels he writes; what he writes he feels.

I have spoken of him as not altogether French in the largeness of his vision. There is also about much of his work a certain gauntness that marks him as one apart from the other great French composers; but in most of his other qualities he marches abreast of them, especially in his freedom from scholastic restrictions, his hatred of the commonplace, his precision, his power of enwrapping his subject in an atmosphere that springs from and is natural to it. As with most of the modern French school, with him the idea is predominant; and also, as with them, the main development of the idea is to be found in the accompaniment, the pianist's position being thus in many of the songs lifted from second place to first. Some of these songs are in reality duets between a singer and a pianist; in others the pianist is the principal performer, and the singer is but an accompanist. This is in accord with one of the main tendencies of modern song; and it is to be feared that, though the song has gained much thereby, it has also lost something. To realise the gain, one needs to look back to the thin and commonplace melody of the French song of the seventies, to its timid and colorless harmony, and to its regular and unenterprising rhythm.

Both his best and his most advanced work—and the two are not necessarily the same—are contained in his *recueils*. Between the Koechlin of the first volume and the Koechlin of the third there is a world of difference, and the second volume shows the transition, though it is only its last number that is in the manner of the third volume. The first two series of "Rondels" are obviously earlier than any of the *recueils*. The third is of much the same period as the first *recueil*—rather later, on the whole. The dates are as follows:

Rondels, ser. 1, 1890-1894; 2, 1891-1895; 3, 1896-1899.

*Recueils*, v. 1, 1890-1902; 2, 1894-1904; 3, 1899-1909.

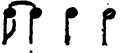
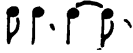
The one song not included in any of these volumes, a setting of Bouilhet's "Moisson prochaine," I judge to be one of the very best among the composer's earlier works, though in spirit it shows an approach to his later manner.

It is wonderful to note that the first song of the first recueil Haraucourt's "Clair de lune," is of the same date as the earliest of the "Rondels," for it is one of the composer's altogether perfect things. In it Koechlin emerges fully armed, a Pallas Athene springing from the head of Zeus. It is a fit preface to a marvellously fine volume. Had I space, I could dwell rapturously on almost every song in the book; but the loveliest of all, to my thinking, is Leconte's "Le colibri," a glorious piece of tone-painting, gorgeous in color, and expressing to perfection the idea inspiring it, a gem beside which Chausson's setting of the same lyric, beautiful as it is, seems pale and insignificant. If, in my opinion, it comes first, I still regard it as only *primus inter pares*, for quite unsurpassable are the gentle melancholy and dainty grace of "Le Menuet" (Greh), the delicate playfulness of "Dame du ciel" (Haraucourt), and the truth and beauty of the three numbers composing op. 15, three wonderful pictures based on verses from Leconte's "Poèmes antiques."

The second *recueil* contains three songs on the same lofty level—a tremendous setting of Leconte's "Les rêves morts," a Fauré-like rendering of the "Sur la grève" of Humières, with a marvellous cinematograph picture of the movement of the sea, and, perhaps the finest thing in the volume, a setting of Verlaine's "Mon rêve familier." In this the atmosphere is wonderfully caught, the idea being realised and depicted perfectly. The right air of mystery is maintained, and, though the tone is subdued throughout, due emphasis is never lacking. The time-changes are delicate and effective; and the greatness and daring of the finale could hardly come from anyone but Koechlin. One would have thought that this fine poem would have made an appeal to many composers; but I can recall no setting of it save this. It is strange to note, by way of contrast, that in some of the other Verlaine songs Koechlin gets nearer to ordinary "prettiness" than he does elsewhere, though there is none of them in which the tendency is not set off by solid excellences.

In the third volume we come upon a new Koechlin, though a Koechlin foreshadowed in "Automne," the last and the latest in date of the songs of the second volume. If greatness in song be defined, as I hold it should be, as "a beautiful rendering of a complete realisation of a worthy idea," every one of the songs in the first two volumes answers the requirements; in the third we get some—"Le

cortège d'Amphitrite," "La maison du matin," "L'île ancienne"—that do not. They are, all three, of no little excellence, are all settings of lovely poems, in all the spirit of the poet has been thoroughly entered into, and all are interesting; yet there is something lacking. It is, in a word, beauty. The voice part is overshadowed, fragmentary, often little more than a recitative, so subordinated to the accompaniment that it ceases to have any separate interest—even any interest at all. These songs are, in fact, not vocal: indeed, from the voice part all trace of melody has been carefully removed. It is not to be supposed that there is no sort of beauty in these numbers; but it is not a consistent and sustained beauty. There is a vagueness, an indefiniteness, an anæmic grayness that is very far removed from the clearness, the straightforwardness, and the overwhelming vitality of the earlier songs. Much of the composer's individuality is gone, the harmonies have lost their inevitability, the melody is no longer full of life and meaning, and the old variety—in itself a marvel—is lacking. Some of these numbers are wonderful experiments; but the best of those in the earlier volumes are much more than wonderful experiments: they are wonderful songs.

Writing thus, I feel that I shall have in disagreement with me not merely pervivid young technicians, but also the composer himself. That is, it is true, only an inference; but it is grounded on the fact that the sincerity that marks these later songs is no less obvious than the sincerity that distinguished the earlier ones, so that the new attitude of the composer is no mere pose. It seems to follow that he entertains the conviction that by his present means he is getting nearer to truth and beauty than he did before. Personally, however, I do feel that in this volume he has come under the influence of Debussy, and that the influence has not been altogether for good, and has led him at times to seem afraid to be himself. The old certainty, breadth, sonority, and beauty have given place to an insubstantiality which is due to his thinking of nothing but atmosphere; and it is a singular, and, to me, unaccountable fact, that while in every other respect he shows all his old care and exactitude, he exhibits in two of the finest Samains in the volume, "Le sommeil de Canope" and "Améthyste," especially in the former, an unwonted prosodic carelessness. After coming to regard him as infallible in such matters, I resent having "tendresse" represented by , and "calices" by .

It must be understood that these strictures are only relative. If less satisfactory than either of its two predecessors, the third

*receuil* is a fine volume nevertheless. The spirit pervading it is a somewhat elusive spirit; but, once it has been caught, the inherent loveliness of the finer songs becomes perceptible. They may be described in colloquial phrase as "growing on one." Moreover even in the case of the less pleasing songs, I regard the method and the manner of them as illustrating a phase in Koechlin's development. I feel sure that he has not sacrificed his splendid individuality on the altar of a modernity which appeals only to the intellect, even though that appeal is made through a beauty of its own—a beauty that is subtle and complex and evasive. There are plentiful indications that the soul of the composer has remained the same, though the manifestations of it have changed. The composer of the *Samains* in this volume is the composer of the *Chéniers* in the first, in which there is as true an atmosphere as in the best of them, together with more loveliness. The difference is that the loveliness is, in the later songs, seeking to find a new form, and has not always succeeded.

It is not only the three songs I have singled out for mention that are more or less unvocal; it is not only in them that Koechlin's gift of lovely melody shows itself merely in brief, unsustained snatches. Some of the others are far more fragmentary than they, far more vague, more indefinite, more elusive. If I rank them higher, it is not that they have more unity, but that they have more beauty; not that the voice-part has more independent interest, but that the conception of the poem has more inherent loveliness. Where the voice is so distinctly in the background as it is in some of these songs, there needs to be superlative beauty in the accompaniment for full atonement to be made. I am not going to endeavor to defend my attitude (which may indeed be quite indefensible) when I say that I would rather have one passage of supreme loveliness in a song than a more commonplace beauty sustained throughout.

There are doubtless young musicians who will, by reason of certain technical qualities that characterise it, proclaim the latest of the songs contained in this volume, "*Soir païen*," to be the very crown of Koechlin's work. That will be to set the means above the end, the effort above the achievement. Technique is merely the road by which the artist travels to attain the beauty that is his aim, or, to change the metaphor, the tool with which he strives to carve it out of the imprisoning rock. Technique is to be judged not for its own sake, but for the effect it creates. In this case the composer has achieved a work of beauty which will appeal only to those who are able—whether easily or laboriously—to enter into the spirit that animated him; but, finely conceived as it is, I cannot think that in it the composer has excelled himself.

The finest song in the volume is the earliest in date, being ascribed to the years 1899-1901. These are probably the dates for the original work, the song's position at the very end of the book indicating perhaps that the pianoforte version was much later than the original orchestral score. It is a very Wagnerian work of quite barbaric grandeur, with a reminiscence of "Die Walküre" that can hardly be unintentional. But for one drawback, it would rank with Koechlin's greatest work in song. The drawback is that it is not really a song at all, but rather a cantata. An anthem is almost as far from being a song as a mosaic is from being a cameo; and this "Chant de Kala Nag," if not a mosaic, certainly treats the poem as one. Its repeats may be quite in place in a choral work, but they are altogether opposed to the spirit of the Song. Having regard to its original form, the work must be pronounced wonderful; it is only when it is regarded as a solo song that any fault is to be found with it.

The composer's op. 1, constituting his first series of "Rondels"—the "Rondels of Théodore de Banville"—must, taken as a whole, be pronounced immature; but the immaturity is that of a man of genius. Here we see what is not very perceptible in even the earliest of the three *recueils*, the influence of Koechlin's first master at the Paris Conservatoire de Musique, Massenet. The influence of his later instructor, Fauré, is more evident in the later work; here it is the influence of the older, the more melodious, the less sincere, and the less vital composer that makes itself felt. In the third series, op. 14, we get nearer to the true Koechlin, the Koechlin of the songs already dealt with. There is, however, a much finer and richer development in the first *recueil* than in the third series of "Rondels."

Among the collected songs there were very few that seemed to me to leave something to be desired, and even those few were songs of much merit; among the "Rondels" it is the majority that are in this case—all save half-a-dozen numbers in the entire series. If I thus group them with the less satisfactory of the later songs, I must not be misunderstood as crediting them with the same qualities and the same defects. If they are on the whole as far from greatness and as far from failure, it yet must be said that as a rule they fail where the others succeed, succeed where the others fail. If some of the composer's latest songs fall below the high level he has set, it is, in the main, because he has made the voice-part merely an accessory and has abandoned melody, and for these things not even the high sincerity informing all of the songs and the marvellous technique displayed can altogether atone; whereas these earlier songs

are instinct with melody and daintiness. What most of them lack is significance and that reverence for the form of the poem that is so marked in the composer's later work.

Of the four songs of outstanding merit in the first and third series, "La guerre" is tremendous and must be very effective with orchestra. Its great discords are most suitable to the subject; and the only flaw in the song is that it ruins the rondel form of de Banville's verse. But for that, it would be one of Koechlin's very greatest. The other three have nothing to mar their glorious perfection; but the grandeur of "Les étoiles" may well be held to give that song prééminence over the lyrical rapture of "Le jour" and the playful grace of "Le thé," a number which suffices of itself to lift the first series into distinction. In this delightful song the pronunciation of the name "Ellen" may seem a fault to one of English race; but it is to be remembered that the poet was French, and doubtless pronounced it French-fashion, as Koechlin does. An English singer might do well to substitute "Elaine." Very dainty also are "L'air" and "Le Matin" in volume two.

Casting a retrospective glance over the songs dealt with, in order to see how Koechlin is suited by the various poets he has set, it is to be noted that the many songs that warrant one in giving him a very high place among the song-composers of the day are not confined to the works of one or two poets, but include his single settings of Hérédia, Sully-Prudhomme, Bouilhet, and Gregh, and his two of Chénier. With Kipling, too, he has scored a great success with "Chant de Kala Nag." Of the poets he has set more frequently, I have no hesitation in saying that he has been most successful with Leconte, since all his nine settings of poems by that writer are masterpieces. The Banville settings are mostly early, but number half-a-dozen fine things; while the work of Edmond Haraucourt he has used to excellent purpose in "Le nénuphar" and in the four songs of op. 7. In his later years his best results have been obtained in Verlaine's "Mon rêve familier" and "Il pleure dans mon cœur." All of the songs indicated are masterly; and, if Koechlin is most at home with Leconte, it is because his genius is better suited by a vision of the stillness of death and a sense of tragic mystery brooding upon the waters than by idyllic fancies and a regretful reconstruction of faded glories, and that his soul craves the vast spaces and the glowing, if somewhat stark, color of Leconte rather than the enclosed gardens and the subdued tones of Verlaine and Samain. And I say again, as I have said before, that in this estimate of the true bent of his genius the composer will, I feel sure, most heartily disagree with me.



There is an aspect of his art to which I must not fail to refer: that is, the extraordinarily high level at which his work is maintained. Most composers of even the highest class have their absolute failures; a few of them occasionally sink still lower—to the deepest deep—when they descend to the banal; and even those who do neither are apt to produce work that is uninteresting. Koechlin, it may safely be said, is never uninteresting; and if there is a degree of demerit less marked than that—if, that is to say, there are songs that are not uninteresting, but that leave one cold—Koechlin may be credited with invariable superiority to it, too, for he never leaves one cold—at least, he has no such effect on me; and one can, of course, speak only of one's own experience.

And, besides the high level he maintains, there is in his work an extraordinary range. Lyrical rapture, dainty grace, playful humor, tragic gloom, tender pathos, barbaric grandeur, haunting dread, and poignant grief all have their place in these wonderful volumes of song. I know no other composer with both so much individuality and such variety.

The task of comparing his work with that of other great French composers is one I do not particularly care to undertake; but I suppose it must be done. Debussy is subtler, but more fragile. Koechlin describes where Debussy suggests; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that Koechlin sometimes describes, whereas Debussy is invariably content with suggestion. Koechlin has neither Debussy's exquisite sensibility, nor his tendency to degenerate into preciosity. The diabolical impishness of "Fantoche" is not in Koechlin; but neither is it in anyone else. Debussy's delicacy of touch may seem often to be beyond Koechlin, yet one or two of the latter's songs display a dainty grace that is well nigh unsurpassable. Debussy was certainly the more original; but the technical qualities displayed by both are remarkable, and each has bestowed upon his work the most scrupulous care. In each there is a combination of the material with the imaginative, the ethereal with the real; but in Koechlin it is the material that predominates; in Debussy, the ethereal. The latter has far less variety than Koechlin, but far more subtlety. He is a worker in nuances, while the other is a great and a bold colorist who in his later songs is deliberately avoiding the glowing color he knows so well how to use. Like the other great French song-composers, Duparc, Fauré, Ravel, both of them know how to get at the very heart of the poems they set.

In Fauré there is a more delicate perfume, a serenity that Koechlin seldom attains. His mastery of rhythm is even greater, and his wealth of harmonic interest is not inferior; but, for all his

genius, the gigantic conceptions of the younger man are beyond him. Duparc's songs are few in number, but of the highest artistry. They are not of the complexity of the songs of the other men dealt with here; but they are of a rare beauty of texture. No touch can be surer than his, no melodic line more perfect; but he is the least original of the five. Finally there is Ravel, most original of all (or at least sharing the honor with Debussy), supple, ironically observant, drily, yet tenderly, humorous, fantastic, yet realistic, bizarre, yet with the utmost clarity of vision, incisive, more robust than Debussy, more various than any of them, save only Koechlin. In power of suggestion not even Debussy can surpass him. In his best songs he is not descriptive, as he is so often stated to be, but, instead of expressing his ideas, gives hints to stimulate the imagination. By the side of such songs most of Koechlin's must of necessity seem somewhat labored; but it is to be said that Ravel's methods would be unsuited to the bulk of the poems that Koechlin has set. Into songs of the sombre, the weird, the tragic, Ravel has not (so far as I am aware) ventured.

That the publication of Koechlin's fourth *recueil* will not be long delayed must be the hope of everyone who knows the three existing collections and has an appreciation of and affection for what is best in modern song.

# MUSIC, MONARCHS, AND "THE SAVAGE BREAST"

By FREDERICK H. MARTENS

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast . . ."—*Shakespeare*.

**S**HAKESPEARE'S dictum is so well-known, so widely quoted, that it is generally accepted as a statement of fact rather than a poetical hypothesis. Yet, if we look into a varied assortment of "savage breasts" of all races and ages, selecting for the purpose those of the rulers of men, hedged by a divinity which by now seems somewhat discredited, we find that, contrary to the assertion of the Bard of Avon, music has no paregoric virtues where they are concerned. On the contrary, the majority of royal monsters, degenerates, tyrants, madmen and weaklings, seem to have cherished music without their "savage breasts" ever reacting to the gentling effect of its charm.

## THE STRONG KINGS

The strong kings, the virile rulers, the conquerors and statesmen among crowned heads, seem to owe their preeminence in a measure to their immunity from the vitiating influence of dulcet tone. For Henry IV of France, the strong man of the Bourbons, the tender busses of Gabrielle d'Estrées, no doubt, made sweeter-sounding music than any of Marot's Huguenot psalms. And Henry, as kings go, is accounted a great king to this day. It was left for the unutterably vicious and depraved Henry III, last of the Valois, to hand down to posterity an "Air du Roi Henri III," which, even if apocryphal, testifies to his musical leanings. For one Frederick the Great of Prussia, tootling away on his flute, entreating Johann Sebastian Bach with reverence, and writing sonatas for his chosen instrument, we have conquerors like Alexander, whom no dithyrambic pæan at the Olympian Games ever pleased half so well as the measured tramp of the Macedonian phalanx; Julius Cæsar, that resourceful bald-head who, though he directed his martial Gallic ballets with splendid bravura, used only the *tubas* and *bucinas* in his legionary orchestra, and probably looked on them as no more than a necessary evil; and Napoleon regarding music as a means to political ends, and at heart fancying only such

percussives as drum and cannon when they were pounding out the rhythms of victory. It is sad for the music-lover to reflect that wherever we may look in the history of the ancients, the virtuous, the noble, the manly among the leaders are those who are free from any musical taint. The good and great kings are usually those who are quite devoid of musical taste or inclination. It is not easy to find a musical monarch to whom the word "respectable" may be fittingly applied. On the other hand, how numerous are the instances of "savage breasts" of music-loving wearers of the diadem unmollified by the music they cherished.

Of course, one may cite the case of David. Here we have a great, wise and, generally speaking, just monarch, who was passionately addicted to the best music known to his age, and who wrote his own psalms. Yet there is a rift in the lute of his perfection. According to Rabbinic tradition, King David used to hang his *kinnor* or lyre at the head of his bed at night "when it sounded in the midnight breeze." This Aeolian harp, stirring amorously to the voluptuous Oriental zephyrs, must have induced a train of thought entirely opposite to that developed by those devout psalm-settings of which the King of Israel was so fond, and may have been responsible, in a degree, for the ingenious tactical disposition which resulted in General Uriah's going West. The charms which soothed the "savage breast" of the father of Solomon were not always those of music. And if so great a monarch as David could so swiftly fall from grace when subjected to the direct influence of profane melody, though steeped in the antidote of devotional psalms, what of those whose music was altogether worldly?

#### DIONYSIUS THE TYRANT

There were the tyrants of Syracuse, Dionysius the Elder, and Dionysius the Younger, his son. The elder Dionysius had poetic aspirations, though his poems were hissed by the auditors at the Olympian Games; while the younger Dionysius was a musician. And what sort of a monarch was this exponent of vocal culture? Plutarch tells us: "It is reported of him that having begun a drunken debauch, he continued it ninety days without intermission, in all which time no person on business was allowed to appear, nor was any serious conversation heard at court; but drinking, *singing*, dancing and buffonery reigned there without control." Dionysius's tyranny and misgovernment led to his being driven from his magnificent Syracusan palace, with its ample wine-cellar and splendid banquet-halls, and having to take refuge in Corinth.

Here "the very same man, that was not long before supreme monarch of Sicily," spent his time turning a more or less honest penny—Plutarch does not disclose to us whether his vocal methods were reliable—"pretending to instruct the singing women of the theatre, and seriously disputing with them about the measure and harmony of pieces of music that were performed there." We suspect that Dionysius's system of voice placing was not all that it might have been. On the other hand, vocal teachers in those times did not receive the splendid financial rewards a higher civilization accords them to-day. But Dionysius is a striking example of the weak and tyrannous ruler who at the same time was a music-lover.

#### THE PTOLEMIES

There were only two Dionysii; with the second the dynasty ends. But if we take that of the Ptolemies, the post-Alexandrian rulers of Egypt, we find that the worth-while Ptolemies were those who had no music in their hearts. Old Ptolemy I (Soter), Alexander's general, who founded this dynasty of Macedonian kings, was a shrewd, able and eminently cautious monarch with a taste for literature, not music. His son, Ptolemy II, Philadelphus, was also able, and took an ardent interest in Helennic culture. He was a kind of Macedonian Louis XIV, and his court was liberally garnished with de la Vallières, de Fontanges, and de Montespons, but—he does not seem to have had any Lullis or Rameaus! Ptolemy III (Euergetes I), was a successful conqueror, another able king with no musical annals. But when we come to Ptolemy IV (Philopator), the musical son of the preceding, we find that he is a wretched debauchee, indulging in all the vices, and leaving the serious affairs of government to unworthy favorites. He paid great attention to the orgiastic forms of religion, or to use Plutarch's words: ". . . the king was so besotted with his women and his wine, that the employment of his most busy and serious hours consisted at the utmost in celebrating religious feasts in his palace, carrying a timbrel and taking part in the show." It was this wretched timbrel-player who did away with that noble Spartan, King Cleomenes, who had taken refuge in Egypt. Nicoragas, the Messenian, an old acquaintance of Cleomenes, met him in Alexandria, and told him that he had brought along some excellent war-horses for the king in his ship. Cleomenes smiled and answered: 'I wish you had rather brought some music-girls, for these now are the king's chief occupation.' Nicoragas repeated Cleomenes's jibe, and Ptolemy promptly had him murdered. For,

in the old days when a musical monarch's artistic temperament got the better of him, things really and actually happened to his critics.

Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) was an athlete and sportsman, and an energetic ruler, but no musician. Ptolemy VI (Philometor) was one of the best of the Ptolemies, brave, kindly, reasonable. Was it because music played no part in his life? His younger brother, and joint-king of Egypt with him, Ptolemy VII, known as *Physkon* or "The Bloated," was an evil fat man, one without natural affection, "delighting in deeds of blood, his body as loathsome in its blown corpulence as his soul," and very, very musical. He both sang and played the flute.

The dynasty of the Ptolemies is already well along in its decline, the successive reigns have become a mere kaleidoscopic chronicle of strife, intrigue and assassination. Ptolemy XI, nicknamed *Auletes*, or "The Flute-player," spent most of his reign in Rome, trying to buy his way back into power in Egypt, whence he had been driven by popular hatred—he was, perhaps, a poor musician!—and in the person of his daughter Cleopatra, "the serpent of the Nile," and the prototype of the modern "vamp," we have a fine musical *connoisseuse*, possessed of great taste and skill, in whom the family came to an end. Cleopatra was fond of having music at her meals—Syrian kithara players, Syracusan harpistes, Athenian girls plucking the five-stringed lyre, rendered instrumental selections or accompanied the singers who sang at her banquets, where Massican and Grecian wines and palm-brandry flowed unchecked by Nilotic blue laws. Music seems always to have remained one of Cleopatra's continuing interests, and her propensity to let herself go, to react subconsciously to the insidious suggestion of lasciv sound, may have been responsible for many of her crimes and misfortunes. Even in her day there were in existence Egyptian popular songs, whose performance she encouraged. And we have only to examine the texts and music of some of our own popular songs to-day, to get an inkling of the lengths to which their like may have led an emotional and temperamental royal musician like Egypt's queen to go. Marc Anthony might have triumphed over Octavius Caesar, had it not been for his addiction to music. For, rude soldier though he was, Marc Anthony also was musically inclined. In Rome, while Caesar was away hunting down the unfortunate Pompey, he "had his singing girls quartered upon the houses of serious fathers and mothers of families." And when he passed over into Asia, "a set of harpers and pipers . . . and a whole Bacchic rout of the like Asiatic exhibitors . . . came in and possessed the court. When he made his entry into Ephesus . . . throughout the town nothing was to be

seen but spears wreathed with ivy, harps, flutes and psalteries; while Anthony in their songs was Bacchus, the Giver of Joy, and the Gentle." Of course, when Cleopatra came sailing up the river Cydnus to meet him, in her barge with purple sails and oars of silver, the latter "beat time to the music of flutes and fifes and harps." In the final analysis they paid the piper, for both these musical rulers, the diademed queen and the uncrowned proconsul, were involved in the same tragic fate.

#### NERO, THE FIRST IMPERIAL TENOR

Among the earlier Roman emperors the greatest of monsters is the musical Nero. He began as a boy by murdering his brother Britannicus for a song's sake. It was during the festivities of the Saturnalia, in the palace, and the young Prince Nero had been chosen king in a game of king's forfeits, by the cast of the dice. After various ones among the company had paid their forfeits in various ways, Nero called on Britannicus to sing them a song. The younger lad sang well and bravely, and he sang a song that described his own ill fortunes and spoiled life. The pathos of the song and the singer moved his patrician listeners, and Nero made note of the fact. As a result Britannicus was poisoned not long after. Nero might have overlooked the political dangers involved in his brother's becoming the head of a faction; but he would not and could not forgive him for singing better than he himself did. As the emperor grew older in sin, his love for music increased, though the average Roman had the greatest contempt for the musical performances which Nero so much enjoyed. The American multi-millionaire builds him an expensive pipe-organ in his home: Nero laid out a species of "Golden Glades" in his private gardens, A. D. 59, and to top off the revels he celebrated there, himself "appeared on the rustic stage of the garden theatre, surrounded by his musicians and, tuning his guitar carefully, sang to the noble company, to their great delight." This "great delight" must, however, be taken with a pinch of salt. It was dangerous for anyone in the audience to be anything less than delighted when Nero appeared as a solo artist. His poetry, music and acting have been, it is true, accorded the dubious merit of being "at least respectable" by one historian; but "respectable" in the critical terminology of art is, unfortunately, on a level with the evasive "pleasing," and neither means very much. One of the main accusations urged by the enemies of Seneca, when they endeavored to prejudice Nero against his former tutor, was that "he sneered at his singing." When Poppaea conspired against

Nero's wife Octavia, to bring about her divorce from the emperor, she falsely charged her with an intrigue, not with some patrician of high descent, but—with an Alexandrian flute-player! For bad as it might have been to have preferred another man to the emperor, a still more heinous crime would have been to have preferred another artist to the artist-prince. When Tiridates came to Rome to be crowned King of Parthia by his over-lord, the Emperor Nero amid the banquets, exhibitions and games in his honor, did not spare him displays of his own playing upon the harp. And the untutored savage had a sufficiently intelligent mind to hear his god in the strings, if not in the wind. For a long time Nero sang only in private. But like many who have a "drawing-room voice," he longed for the recital-stage and a larger audience. "His voice was, in fact, thin and inclined to be hoarse"; though he himself was so proud of it, and longed impatiently to try it out in public. "There is no respect for hidden music," he was wont to say, quoting a Greek proverb. Yet he did not dare choose a Roman city for his vocal debut, such was the prejudice against an emperor's appearing as a public singer. We have an echo of this prejudice in connection with Piso's conspiracy to murder Nero, and become emperor in his stead. Subrius Flavus, the tribune, one of the conspirators, was reported to have said that he would kill Piso so soon as Nero were dead. "The soldiers were not going to replace a harpist (Nero) by a vocalist (Piso). That would not heal the disgrace!" Nero chose the Grecised city of Naples for his "coming-out," in A. D. 64, and no sooner was his recital over, and the theatre emptied, than an earthquake destroyed it. This seems more than a coincidence: Nature herself appears to voice a protest. His first performance in Rome was on the occasion of the burning of the city, and though for various reasons, it is too much to say that "Nero fiddled while Rome burned," it is highly probable that he did sing, from a safe elevation, while his capital went up in flames, for to the imperial artist the burning city was no more than an effective stage-setting for his glorious singing.

In the reaction from the fear induced by Piso's conspiracy, Nero—quantitatively, at any rate—sang as never before. The Roman Senate, when he announced his intention of singing at the Quinquennial Games, A. D. 65, in a vain effort, perhaps, to stave off hearing the recital which they foresaw they would be forced to attend, offered him the prizes of song and eloquence *before* the performances began. But this piqued Nero, and he said he would meet all comers in the contest for song superiority. The result was, of course, the same. It was disloyal not to applaud. An unbiased opinion as to



Nero's singing was as dangerous then, as one regarding governmental methods might be now. The equivalent of a modern attorney-general had his spies liberally distributed about the theatre, and the Roman Department of Justice acted with the intelligent zeal which marks any bureau of its kind under incompetent and tyrannical rule. It was forbidden to leave the building while Nero was on the stage. Keen-witted Greeks in the audience feigned death in order to be carried out, and Vespasian, who fell asleep during one of the emperor's recitals, nearly lost his life in consequence. It was spared only at the intercession of friends. During Nero's great song-tour of Greece, the concluding event of artistic magnitude of his life, he won—as was to be expected—the chief prizes at all the four festivals, the Olympian, Pythian, Nemean and Isthmian. He returned to Rome with 1,808 crowns of victory, which had been awarded him, riding in a magnificent triumphal procession to celebrate his vocal victories, along the same streets where the great generals and pro-consuls who had given Rome the dominion of the earth had ridden to their more patriotic triumphs. And with him in his chariot was—Diodorus the harper! Nero's crowns were hung on the walls of his bed-chamber, and his image as the harpist-god adorned the streets of the city, and was stamped upon his coins. And then he took up the study of music with renewed energy. The Emperor, as Suetonius declared, "nor yet would do aught in earnest or mirth without his *Phonascus* by, a *Moderatour* of his voice, to put him in minde for to spare his pipes and hold his handkerchief to his mouth: and to many a man he eyther offered friendship or denounced enmitie according as he praised him more or less." But the Romans by now had had their fill of Nero. Vindex in Gaul and Galba in Spain rose against him. The news filled him with terror, but his cruelty was equalled by his incapacity. The musician-emperor makes a few half-hearted efforts to gather troops, but is far more interested in examining some new hydraulic organs, sending late at night for leading knights and senators to rejoice with him in the discovery that: "I have found out how the organ can be made to sound a lower note, and more tunefully." Or, after a feast, he decides to present himself unarmed to the armies' sight, with no argument save tears only, whereby the rebels would be recalled to their fealty. Then on the following day he would chant the Ode to Victory among his rejoicing legionaries. "Which Ode," he continues, "I must compose at once!" And before he cuts his throat at the villa of his freedman Phaon, when the hoof-beats of his pursuer's horses sound on his ear, he murmurs, "How great an artist dies with me!"

As might be expected, the vicious and incapable Vitellius, who followed Galba and Otho as emperor, admired Nero. "Sing us one of the Master's songs!" he was wont to tell a harpist who pleased him. But when the accession of Vespasian once more gives the Roman world a strong ruler, a man of character and high resolve, we know almost without saying, that music plays no part in his life.

#### HELIOGABALUS

Heliogabalus (A. D. 218-222) is another musical emperor, and what is he like? As Gibbon so neatly puts it: "To confound the order of seasons and climates, to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were among the number of his most delicious amusements." We cannot quote all that Aelius Lampridius, who lived in the fourth century under Diocletian and Constantin, and is the only writer who has written a biography of the monster, has to say; for he says much that is unquotable. Yet there is no doubt but that he was an uncommonly restless and depraved degenerate, gifted with a vicious imagination, fertile in bizarre and disgusting futilities. Some of the artistic touches of this music-loving prince are quite modern. He gave festivals of different colors in summer: one day the table service would be olive-green, another pea-green; the day after it would be blue, and so on through the summer months. He was the first to flavor wine with mint and mastic, as indeed his whole life was devoted to a search for the novelties of voluptu. He took particular pleasure in studying mob psychology—after his own fashion. When great crowds were gathered together for a solemn festival, he had a large number of serpents loosed on them, and uttered cries of delight to see those bitten and those trampled under foot in the ensuing panic, writhing in their agony. Wine of roses and rosebuds filled the baths in which he bathed with his familiars, and one of his pleasant fancies at banquets was to have his guests recline on couches inflated with wind. These were suddenly emptied, and the diners found themselves eating under the table. At night he attended to the business of the day, arising in the evening to receive the homage of his courtiers, and going to bed in the morning. In place of an auto he had a little one-wheeled chariot, gilded and inlaid with jewels, to which he harnessed three or four beautiful girls, and thus drove about the courts of the palace. Since his Syrian priests had predicted he would die a violent death, he kept on hand a stock of nooses, of scarlet and purple silk, with which to strangle himself; he had swords of gold upon which to fall in case of

need; and in hollowed hyacinths and emeralds he carried mortal poisons. He even had a high tower built, from which, if the necessity arose, he meant to fling himself on a board incrustated with gold and precious stones. Thus his death would be embellished with all the trappings of luxury; while at the same time it could be said that no one had ever yet perished in such wise. Yet he was, in the end, slain by the steel broadsword of a rebellious soldier, and his dishonored body flung into the Tiber. How do we know—aside from his general depravity—that Heliogabalus was a music-lover, that he out-Neroed even Nero as a performer? Because Aelius Lampridius expressly says: "He sang, he danced, he played the flute, he blew the trumpet, he plucked the lute and played the organ." And the Byzantine historian Zonaras adds: "He sang barbaric songs to his strange (Syrian) god!"

Though among the Roman emperors Nero and Heliogabalus are outstanding examples of the degeneracy which seems part and parcel of the make-up of the crowned music-lover, there are numerous other examples to be found among their successors.

#### SOME ORIENTAL MUSICAL DYNASTS

But passing from the empire of the Romans, let us glance at the Oriental dynasts of the caliphate. The earlier and greater caliphs of the Omayyad house, Omar, Moawiya, Abdalmalik, Sueliman Walid (during whose reign Spain was conquered by the Arabs), had no time for music. But the weaker Yazid II held music, condemned by his predecessors Suleiman and Omar II, in high honor. Two of his court singers, Sallama and Hababa, exercised a great influence over him, and the death of the latter afflicted him so greatly that he perished of grief soon after she herself had died. Hisham followed Yazid II, and after Hisham came his son Walid II, "a handsome man," who cultivated music *con amore*, so much so, in fact, that the governor of Irak, on being confirmed in his office when Walid ascended the throne, included a number of *musical instruments* among the gifts of horses, falcons, golden and silver vessels which he sent the caliph as a sign of his gratitude. Walid had no real opportunity of proving the correctness of our hypothesis respecting musical monarchs, for he was murdered before the gift of musical instruments sent by his governor ever reached him.

Like the Omayyids, the earlier Abassids were also men of might, not men of music. Even Haroun-al-Rashid enjoyed it only incidentally. But among his successors we see mismanagement and music, incapacity and sonal sensibility ever going hand in hand.

There was Amin, for instance (d. 813), who was wholly incompetent. He occupied himself principally with the affairs of his harem, with polo, fishing, wine and *music*. Naturally, "the five years of his reign were disastrous to the empire." His successor, Mamun, was a ruler of rare qualities. His interests were scientific and literary, and his reign was a glorious one. During the reigns of Motawakkil, a cruel and perfidious voluptuary, Montasir, a weakling, Mostain and Motazz, the magnificent palace of Jafariya, which Motawakkil had built at Samarra, resounded to the pleatings of instruments and the voice. But one of the first measures of the able and energetic Mohtadi, when he ascended the throne, was to banish from court all musicians and singers. A ruler of this type was too good for the times, and Mohtadi was murdered in the year 870. With Motamid, his successor, the banished song-birds and lutenists probably returned to the palace; but they just as probably had to move out once more when his grandson Motadid inherited the crown, for after Mansur, this prince was one of the ablest and most energetic of the Abassid rulers. But thenceforward the Abassid dynasty died out tunelessly in shame and degradation through a succession of unworthy rulers, until the last caliph of the line, Mostasim, was slain by the Mongol Khan Hulaku in his own plundered capital. Hulaku, incidentally, a monster of cruelty, had the head of Kamil, a Maineluk prince whom he captured, and whom he killed by forcing bits of flesh torn from his body down his throat, carried through the streets of Damascus "with tambourines and singers moving before it," his "savage breast" quite unmoved by this ghastly musical procession.

#### SOME ENGLISH MUSICAL KINGS

Reverting from East to West once more, and considering some of the mediaeval dynasties of European rulers, we still find Shakespeare's contention not borne out by historic fact, in so far as it may be applied to kings. Alfred the Great, it is true, played the harp, and so did many a Norse, Swedish and Danish king of the time; the latter all having their trains of scalds and minstrels; but the music these bardic musicians made, served mainly as an incitement to deeds of blood and battle. Taillefer, who rode into the battle of Hastings singing the "Song of Roland," did so to animate the hearts of the Normans and Duke William. In the case of these rulers the bardic songs and harpings largely answered the same purpose that the roll of drum and brazen blare of military band do to-day. They were mere martial sound stimulants, all harping on the same old tune

of "Up, boys and at 'em!" They stood for no "charm to soothe." A little later on we come to Richard the Lion-Heart, King of England, Richard the troubadour, the chivalric, the gallant, the Crusader, passionately devoted to minstrelsy—and, perhaps, quite unconsciously one of the worst of English kings, because of his senseless prodigality, his love for expensive adventure far from home, his sacrifice of all the real interests of his kingdom for the rainbow bubbles of romantic enterprise. The story of how Blondel sang him out of his Austrian prison is well known. And his cruel and debauched brother, King John Lackland, who died of a surfeit of peaches and new cider, was also a lover of worldly tunes and ballads. Speaking of other English monarchs, Mary Bateson, in her "Medieval England" remarks with truth: "It is noticeable that of England's artistic kings, Henry III, Richard II and Charles I, not one was in harmony with his subjects." All of these sovereigns were prodigal, weak and devoid of executive ability. Henry III, "Harry of Winchester," also known as "the beggar-king," because of the extravagance which left him continually without resources, had unique methods of raising money when it was needed to pay his painters, artificers and musicians. When his son Edward was born, in 1236, the streets of London were illuminated, "whilst bands of dancers made the night joyful with drum and tambourine." But the king, fond as he was of a "joyful noise," quite aside from mere tuneful rejoicing also had an eye to more substantial expressions of pleasure on the part of his subjects. He sent messengers into the city and country to *ask* for presents. When they came back well loaded, the king smiled with satisfaction; but if the gift were small it was rejected with contempt. "God gave us the child," said one Norman, "but the king sells him to us!" It is no wonder the money flew, if we consider Henry's luxurious tastes. He must have his mattresses of velvet, his cushions and bolsters of silk, his damask napery, his goblet of mounted cocoa-nut, his glass cup set in crystal. And when his sister Isabella marries the Emperor, he gives her rich examples of goldsmiths' work, silver pans and cooking vessels, a chess-table and chessmen in an ivory casket, beds of Genoese cloth of gold, robes of Arras, and of scarlet, blue and green cambric, and much else by way of table-linen. And he pays a single harper at his court the very sizable stipend, very sizable indeed for that time, of forty shillings, and allows the musician a pipe of wine for himself and another pipe for his wife. The money to pay for his artistic and musical extravagances the king obtained by begging, borrowing and stealing—for in 1248, parliament remonstrated because the king "seized by force on whatever was used in the way of meat and drink

—especially wine and even clothes—against the will of those who sold these things!"

The tyrannical Richard II was another lavishly extravagant and incapable ruler, one who indulged his luxurious tastes by the most arbitrary methods of taxation. In his love for music he was the first English sovereign to have recourse to the "press-gang" to secure singing boys for the Royal Chapel. An official was authorized "to take and seize for the king all such singing-men expert in the science of music as he could find and think able to do the king service, within all places of the realm, as well as in cathedral churches, colleges, chapels, houses of religion, and all other franchised or exempt places, or elsewhere." Thus a tyrant for music's sake, he also lavished the most disproportionate rewards and annuities on his musicians out of the taxes wrung from his impoverished people—a truly musical monarch. He came to a bad end.

In fine contrast, King Henry V, the conqueror of France, though at his coronation at Westminster, "the number of harpers in the hall was innumerable," was himself "no encourager of the popular minstrelsy" which flourished in such perfection during his reign. When he returned in triumph from Agincourt, and made his entry into London, he came out firmly against the community sing—a stand which, according as one does or does not believe in community singing, may be held to argue that he was either quite unmusical or very musical indeed. Children had been placed in artificial turrets to sing verses in honor of the occasion. But King Henry would by no means countenance their music, which he not only forbade, but commanded that in the future "no ditties should be made by and sung by minstrels and others" in praise of the battle. King Henry V, who did not care for minstrelsy or children's choruses, died universally lamented by his subjects; while the taking off of Richard II, that magnificent music-lover, was felt by them as a distinct relief.

Henry VIII came honestly enough by his love for music. His father King Henry VII was rapacious and extortionate, and cultivated music. He was always attended by waits and minstrels, and had a fine collection of musical instruments. Henry VIII, another quasi-monster, delighted above all other things in "singing, dancing, wrestling, casting of the bar, playing at the recorders, flute, virginals, in setting of songs and making of ballads." Music remained a life-long passion with him, but it did not make him more humane or less licentious. The title of his best-known ballad, "The hunte is up," when we view it in the light of his activities as a ruler and a husband, seems almost to suggest the never-ending chase which drove so many victims to the axe and block on Tower Hill.

Queen Elizabeth shared one peculiarity with the Emperor Nero. It was dangerous not to praise whatever she did. There is no doubt that she was fond of music, and encouraged it at her court. But with regard to her own virginal playing, we suspect that the chances are that her unfortunate contemporary and cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, being by far—despite the romantic glamor surrounding her—the worse sovereign, must have been the better musician. The whole trend of historic fact lends support to the supposition.

The weak and worthless Stuarts who followed the Plantagenets and Tudors were all, as stands to reason, encouragers and patrons of music. James I, close and mean as he was about money matters, increased the stipend of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal as one of the first acts of his reign. His son, the Prince of Wales, afterward King Charles I, learned to play the *viola da gamba* as a boy, and he became as accomplished a musician as he made a poor king. Cromwell, a strong man, knew no music save such pious airs as were set to godly psalms, and their words meant more than their tunes to him; but with the Restoration profane music again becomes the delight of the English court. That merry monarch Charles II was especially fond of his band of twenty-four fiddlers, and paid them well—when he paid them at all. On the other hand the musicians of the Royal Chapel, though their salaries were raised, never saw the color of their money, for Mr. Hingston, the organist, talking to Pepys (1666) says: “many of the musique are ready to starve, they being five years behind with their wages.” There was always plenty of music, both instrumental and vocal, at Whitehall, fostered by the king who sold his country to the French, and who, as a ruler, was probably the worst of all the Stuarts.

#### MUSICAL MONARCHS OF FRANCE

What holds good for English kings applies as well to the sovereigns of other European nations. Clovis, King of the Franks, a murderous monster, whose latter years in particular were stained by numerous crimes, sang. As has been said of him: “King Clovis sang out of tune, no doubt, but still he sang!” His was another “savage breast” uncharmed. King Dagobert, the Merovingian, an oppressive and licentious monarch, *did* have “music in his soul,” hence should not have been “fit for treason, stratagem and spoils.” He played the organ, and loved singing to such an extent, that hearing the nun Nanthilde warbling matins behind the cloister bars, he fell head over heels in love with her. As a result, again disproving Shakespeare, he betrayed his queen, divorcing her; used stratagem

to draw Nanthilde from her refuge, and married her as the spoils of his musical passion. When we come to the Capetians, we find that Hugh Capet, the able and energetic founder of the dynasty, was not what might be called musical. His son, however, Robert the Pious, was a weak and amiable music-lover, who composed hymns for the church service. Is it strange that he had a disturbed and stormy reign? Some of his hymns still survive, among them one beginning "O Constantia martyr." His wife Constantia had asked him to write a composition in her honor, and seeing her name beginning the first line of the text, was satisfied that he had done so, without investigating further. Philip Augustus, who was not musical, consolidated his kingdom and built hospitals, market-places, churches and other public buildings in Paris, whose principal streets he was the first to pave. His successor, Louis IX, though a man of noble character and extremely pious, included church music in the circle of his most vital interests. When he set sail for his Crusade against the Egyptian sultan his mariners sang the "Veni Creator" in chorus. There is, of course, no connection between this circumstance and the fact that his Egyptian Crusade was a total failure, he himself being taken prisoner, and only released upon payment of an enormous ransom, and that he died on a second crusade against Tunis, years afterward. And yet . . .

At the gorgeous court of King Philip VI of France, at which resided the Kings of Bohemia, Navarre and Mallorca, with their retinues—for their dull homes were never like Philip's Paris—all was banquets, balls, pageantry and mysteries, in which music played a leading part. But Philip had his Crecy. His son, King John, proud, presumptuous and cruel, and addicted to minstrels and magnificence like his father, found, in turn, Agincourt. The reign of Charles VI was also a musical one: the orchestra of the "Prince of Fools" flooded the royal court with music; and the king's wife, Isabelle of Bavaria, a monster in female form, was an accomplished harpist, though she did not use her art to calm her poor, mad husband's accesses of dementia. It was a reign of blood, murder and rapine, and one that well-nigh ruined the country. Charles VII is the king of "The Maid of Arc," but he is also the king of Agnes Sorel, to whose voice he loves to listen, and upon whom he lavishes the treasures of his realm. A king with a love for music, especially vocal music rendered by some fair and beloved singer, invariably increased the high cost of living for his subjects in the good old medieval days in France.

King René of Jerusalem and Sicily, Count of Provence, a contemporary of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, is literally music-mad.



He plays the violin himself, and spends his time with music-makers and minstrels, and his money on them. And so it goes: Louis XII, with whom the sixteenth century begins, and who burdened France with many costly wars, insists on being a singer. He has no voice; a single dubious note constitutes his entire range. So Josquin Duprez utilizes this sole note by writing a canon for the King, in which the royal vocalist may take part while singing no more than the one tone nature has placed at his disposal. Francis I, ruled by shallow-minded and incapable favorites, plays the lute; Charles IX has quite a gift for the violin—and carries out the bloody Massacre of St. Bartholomew! The fact that he preferred the violin to the flute or clavecin—then the instruments reserved for the quality, while the violin was held to be fit only for lackeys—shows that his musical tastes, from the standpoint of his own day, were low and vulgar. Henry III, the last of the Valois kings, was a sixteenth century Heliogabalus, and a lavish patron of music and pageantry. His insensate expenses ruined France, and the example set by himself and his infamous court, brought the morals of the land to their lowest ebb. Louis XIV, the most conspicuous of the Bourbons, though he has been called “the Great,” cannot in reality be so considered. He did not care for music in the genuine and intimate way that the Valois monarchs did, and he regarded those musical geniuses Lully and Rameau more as added embellishments of the festival pomp of his court, than as the creators of an independent artistic enjoyment dear to his heart. Louis XV had a fondness, especially in his ribald later years, for the *chansons grivoises*, whose low popular tunes and indecent verses he enjoyed in equal measure with Mme. du Barry, a *connoisseuse* entirely at home in them. Poor, dull Louis XVI did not react sensibly to music, though Marie Antoinette, the pupil of Gluck, had a neat gift for the clavecin and could sing. When not hunting, or enduring the tedious court ceremonial to which he was a slave, his dearest pleasure was his iron-work in his private smithy. Was he kind-hearted, virtuous and well-meaning because he was unmusical?

#### DEAD HAPSBURGHS, HOHENZOLLERNS, WITTELSBACHERS

We may turn to almost any other royal dynasty and find a similar showing of love for music coupled with weakness, lack of character, cruelty, depravity and every other vice; while the great and good monarchs are those who keep more or less aloof from the seduction of sound. In the case of the Moorish Omayyads of Spain, Abderrahman I and Abderrahman the III were great princes, skilled in war and adept administrators, but the reign of Abderrahman II, a

weak prince with a taste for music and literature, is described as a "time of confusion." Let us glance at the Hapsburgs. Rudolph of Hapsburgh, the founder of the dynasty, was a man who had no time for music—he was too busy creating an empire—but a weakness for music crept into the family long before the marriage of Francis, Duke of Lorraine, to the Empress Maria Theresia. The Emperor Ferdinand III, under whom the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire was practically accomplished, was a musical *connoisseur* of considerable taste, and composed himself, notably an "Aria with 36 Variations," edited by his Court Organist Ebner. Leopold I, an intolerant bigot, was musically very well educated. He played several instruments, notably the clavecin, and "tried out" the singers and instrumentalists who applied for positions in the Imperial orchestra himself. He always followed the score at opera performances, and would close his eyes blissfully when the most entrancing passages occurred. He left the war of the Spanish Succession as an evil legacy to his sons.

The oldest of these sons, who succeeded him as the Emperor Charles VI, was especially fond of composing canons, and accompanying at the piano. His daughter, the Empress Maria Theresia, was anything but a monster; but she was an out-and-out autocrat. Both she and her husband—during whose reigns Austria lost the bitterly contested Seven Years' War to Prussia—did much for the musical education of their children. In the midst of war, his country falling into ruins, his court receiving the bribes of his enemies, Charles VI composed an opera. He led the orchestra, the rôles were taken by princely and noble amateurs, and in the ballet which followed, his daughter danced in flesh-colored tights. His grandson, the gifted and artistic Joseph II, not only sang, but also played the pianoforte, the viola and the 'cello. He played a great deal for his own amusement, but was satisfied with the works of a Hasse and Salieri, not being able to rise to the heights of Mozart's genius. He told the latter, *à propos* of a performance of "The Abduction from the Seraglio": "Too fine for our ears, and what a tremendous number of notes, my dear Mozart!" Haydn's music, too, was beyond the emperor's limited musical taste to grasp. Joseph II did not escape the tragic fate which seems to be reserved for the few musical monarchs of good personal repute. Disgusted with the failure of his liberal and idealistic plans, he died of a broken heart.

As to the Hohenzollerns, Frederick the Great, a benevolent autocrat, plays the flute, yet is an empire builder in spite of this amiable weakness. But Frederick William II, who succeeded his

uncle Frederick, was easy-going, indolent and sensual. He played the 'cello; patronized Beethoven and Mozart, and instead of building up his country—when he died the state was bankrupt, the army decayed, and the monarchy discredited—built up the finest private orchestra to be found in Europe at that time. Among the lesser German princes of the eighteenth century were but few men of energy or character—and the majority of them were musical.

In the nineteenth century we have the mad King of Bavaria, Louis II, who, though he taxed his peasants to the bone in order to build the luxurious medieval castles (Linderhof, Herrenchiemsee, Hohenschwangau, Neuschwanstein) which attract visitors from all over the world, spared no money to launch the Wagner operas. He paid the composer's debts, granted him a large yearly pension, gave brilliant model performances of the Wagner dramas in Munich, gradually became incurably insane and met a tragic and mysterious death in the Starnberger See, together with his physician in 1886. His is one of the saddest cases among the royal musical madmen, for he had lovable traits, and, though wildly extravagant, was no Nero or Alphonse of Portugal.

#### MUSICAL MONARCHS OF THE NORTH

Yet fate is seldom kind to the monarchs loving music. They engage either our horror, or our commiseration. Mad musical kings are to be found in the cold North as well as in the sunny southern Bavarian land. King Eric XIV of Sweden, son of the great Gustavus Vasa, is crowned at Upsala, and rides gaily through Stockholm on July 12, 1561, to the roar of cannon, the peal of bells, and the cheers of his people. He loves music, and even writes a number of four-part choruses to Latin texts. But there is a pronounced strain of madness in him. He antagonizes his ambitious brothers, offends his nobles by marrying a young girl of obscure family, and is finally dethroned by the States of the Kingdom. Thrown into a dungeon and loaded with chains, he appeals to his brother John in the name of their father, and the latter orders books and musical instruments be given him. Yet they are taken from him again after a few days, and he is confined with even greater rigor. Removed to another prison he is tortured by being allowed to see his wife and child through the window, for a moment only. He endeavors to find consolation in singing the Psalms of David, and finally, poor maniac, is murdered in his prison. Christian IV of Denmark, splendor-loving, passionate, sensual, whose reign was an unfortunate one, and who descended to his grave weary and broken-hearted, was another

Scandinavian monarch who cultivated music with zest, and had the German composer Heinrich Schütz come to Copenhagen to reorganize his court orchestra.

It is not surprising to note, perhaps, that the most wretched of all the Romanoffs, the Emperor Peter Fedorovitch, son of a daughter of Peter the Great, "physically something less than a man and mentally little more than a child," did much to encourage the cultivation of music in Petrograd, and that, imbecile though he was, he is said to have played the violin "moderately well."

## TWO KINGS OF SPAIN

Among the Spanish Bourbons King Philip V, a sullen melancholiac, who was only kept from abdicating through his wife's holding him a virtual prisoner, was controlled in his sombre madness by the voice of Farinelli, the celebrated *castrato*. Farinelli came to Madrid in 1736, intending to stay a few months. He remained for twenty-five years. Night after night, ten years in succession, he had to sing to his royal master the same six songs, never any other. Ferdinand VI, the son of Philip, was also of a shy and melancholy disposition; and since music, with the exception of the hunt, was almost his sole pleasure and interest, Farinelli went right on with his nightly concerts. King Charles IV of Spain was a poor king and only a fair musician, yet very fond of music. Like so many string players who like to play quartet, yet are unhappy if they cannot play the first fiddle, whether they are qualified to do so or not, King Charles, until dethroned by Napoleon, always reserved this part for his royal self.

## A PORTUGUESE MUSICAL MANIAC

King Charles was merely a poor fool, but what are we to think of the unutterably vile and musical Alphonse VI, King of Portugal (1656-1688), a semi-maniac with strong homicidal tendencies. His life was an agreeable alternation of murder, music and licentious excess. He played the flageolet. He had married, in 1666, Marie Françoise Elizabeth, grand-daughter of Henry IV of France. Quite naturally, it did not take Queen Marie long to discover that she detested her amiable husband. Following this first discovery came a second one: she had fallen in love with his brother Don Pedro. There were various intrigues, plots and counterplots to force the abdication of Alphonse, and keep him on the throne. The King, his brother Pedro, Queen Marie, and some of the Portuguese nobles, appeared on the balcony of the palace to receive the plaudits of the

crowd. As an act of royal condescension, King Alphonse took a flageolet, piped a tune on it in the most abominable manner and, when he had finished, handed the instrument to a grave and respected nobleman and insisted on his playing it also. "The lowest of the populace were so disgusted that they had almost laid hands on the royal flageolet player, and dethroned him then and there." This sensible proceeding was not long deferred, in fact, and the insane musical king was kept in a confinement far too honorable for him until his death, passing his time in hunting, feasting, sleeping and—presumably—playing his beloved flageolet.

### CONCLUSION

The preceding presentation of monarchs whose more or less "savage breasts"—or if not savage, then irresolute, depraved, imbecile, or insane—refute the Shakespearian assertion anent music's power to charm, is by no means categorical. It merely brushes the surface, so to speak, in a general survey, which cannot pretend to be comprehensive. At the same time it bears sufficient witness to the truth of the contention that—in monarchs, at any rate—there is often a subtle interconnection between musical tastes and proficiencies, and a lack of kingly and even human virtues. History seems determined to prove that a love for music is a species of immorality in the case of the crowned head; that it often lays a curse on its activities. Perhaps it would be going too far to try to fix the exact degree to which the musical leanings of the ex-emperor William II of Germany, his encouragement of Leoncavallo operas, and his own "Sang an Aegir," were responsible for his overthrow and the loss of the late war by the Central Powers. Yet one might be tempted to believe, in the light of historic evidence, that the cult of music by royalty is distinctly of ill omen for its cultivators. Napoleon III was fond of Offenbach and Waldteufel waltzes. This indulgence alone would not have brought him to Sedan and Wilhelmshöhe. But with a liking for Waldteufel went the other characteristics often found in a musical temperament: a tendency to visionary speculation, a weak and easy yielding to the influence of others, an abdication of the dictates of reason in favor of sentimental affection. That unfortunate Mexican Emperor Maximilian, one of the most sympathetic of the Hapsburgs, was not shot by his rebellious subjects because he was musical, nor because he had had sent to the Tyrolean Alps for a shipment of two thousand canary-birds, to teach the gorgeously plumaged feathered tribes of the Mexican forests a truly musical bird-note, and increase, multiply, and subdue

the wilderness of Anahuac with their song. No, not because he had the musical temperament, but because it made itself felt in momentous practical decisions, and carried with it the artistic weaknesses and irresolutions which are fatal when rapid and decided action are demanded.

Are the uncomplimentary theories regarding music and "the savage breast," which history seems to justify with such an abundance of proof, applicable only to the uneasy heads of royalty? Ordinary mortals, the rank and file, who are able to enjoy music and compose and execute it without suffering morally, will be inclined to answer in the affirmative. Had they not been emperors and kings, Nero, Heliogabalus, Henry III of France, Richard II of England, and many another might have made better musicians—they could not have been worse rulers. Still, perhaps, some day Shakespeare's poetic hypothesis may become universally true and an actual fact.

# THE ENJOYMENT OF MUSIC

By HANS SCHNEIDER

*Chaqu'un à son goût !*

**T**HE enjoyment of music is an absolutely individual matter. Perhaps not two people enjoy the same composition in the same way and to the same degree.

The trained musician whose enjoyment of music is the result of knowledge, reasoning, and of experienced and trained listening, might well be wondering how others enjoy music, who do not possess all these attributes or possess them in a more or less confused degree.

In using the word "music" one is badly handicapped, as we have no distinct terms for bad and good music or for real serious music and the kind which might charitably be called "ordered noise." To classify music according to its true merit and find special terms for it would be an endless and hopeless task, and so the term covers the most trivial and the most sublime.

Yet everyone of the distinctions that could be made and that really exists has its followers who love, and stoutly defend their kind and demonstrate their dislike of the "wrong" kind in unmistakable manner.

The answer to this question is then to be found in individuality, or personality, which, according to Goethe, is the greatest gift to man. Dean Browne of the Yale Divinity School recently coined the phrase, "Man is incurably religious;" and we might also say: "Man is incurably musical." Shakespeare's man, who "has no music in his soul," does not exist except as a physical abnormality.

According to poets and sentimentalists, music is the language of the soul, the voice of the emotions, the wireless between souls. But it is plain that, starting with such uncertain premises, as the word "soul," we can never come to clear conclusions, and while such expressions lead us into choice reverie and rhapsody in the n'th dimension, they will never answer our question definitely. This can be done only by investigating it from a strictly physical point of view.

The principal and most natural quality of music is rhythm. It originated with and lives by music and the absence of it means the loss of music. All musical works that are immortal, are so by the grace of their rhythmic superiority. All other music (and the music publishers know what a graveyard they support) owes its demise to rhythmic anaemia.

All the emotions may be explained in terms of physical activity, and produce, in one way or another, motor energy. All pleasure and pain is either enhancement or arrest of functional activity, either increase or decrease of a primitive feeling-state. Closely connected with this is acceleration or retardation of the blood circulation, which plays a most important part in the general physical condition; and thus again governs and influences matters of personality.

The change in the blood circulation is possible through the decrease or increase of the heart's amplitude, through the ability to beat faster or slower; and, as the heart beats continuously, it acts almost like a metronome, which marks time to our march through life, from the cradle to the grave, and decides upon the intimate tempo—slow or fast—to which our symphony of life is to be played.

From the beginning of life we have been accustomed to the heart and pulse beats, which recur periodically, and divide "time" into equal fragments. But that is what rhythm does with music; and if body and music make use of the same important force, it is not to be wondered at, that music appeals first to the body (*physis*) and only secondarily and through associated processes to the soul (*psyche*).

When we see, for instance, a primitive specimen of humanity "enjoying" music, we are sure that this is neither a soul-feast nor an aesthetic affair, for upon examination the music he "enjoys" will be found to be of an essentially primitive rhythmic character, which appeals exclusively to the body, whose most movable parts, head, arms and legs, involuntarily move in time with it.

But this accompanying of music with bodily motion is a great deal more than a mere response to rhythm; it is also the unconscious desire to recreate the music, which desire Yrjo Hirn (*The Origin of Arts*) proclaims as one of the strongest features of the enjoyment of any art. This theory also explains most satisfactorily many other peculiarities connected with the enjoyment of music. It also explains why, in art alone, the association of other senses with the principal one does not decrease, but increases the enjoyment through the principal sense.



It is a well-known psychological fact that simultaneous stimulation of several senses enhances enjoyment in general, but diminishes the intensity of response of each individual sense. To be forced to listen to music during dinner—a most barbaric custom, from a gastronomic point of view—may increase the general feeling tone, but the strain upon the auditory centre surely must detract from the proper enjoyment of the food. Yet in acquiring music, the sense of seeing, for instance, is one of the greatest helps to the majority of concert-goers; in fact many of them would be utterly helpless if they were deprived of its use.

Whenever people watch the conductor closely, or ask for seats “where they can watch the hands of the pianist” they follow instinctively the impulse of employing another sense—that of the eye—to increase their enjoyment. This is also the psychologic reason for the popularity with the great majority of such men as Creatore and de Pachmann, and their equal failure to attract the more sensitive listener, because in both cases their performance appeals as much to the eye as to the ear.

However, one cannot deny that the sympathetic and impressive gestures, the bodily expression in the conducting of such men as Nikisch and the late Mahler, the most impressive and expressive conductor of all, does materially assist in conveying the symbolic meaning of a musical phrase that would otherwise be too deep for such listeners to appreciate. It was Nietzsche who said that the majority of people were always deficient in the ability to understand the symbolism of music, and therefore had to cling to the formal part of it.

Rhythm of course, is not the only quality of music, for although there must be rhythm, there is plenty of music in which this quality makes itself very little felt, as for instance in “slow” music. So-called slow music is essentially melodic. The organic source of melody is harmony and the tendency of tones for certain progressions is due to the feeling of key. But as we have in the heart a physical organ closely associated with rhythm, so we have in the ear one that is sympathetically responsive to mere tone combinations.

This organ of the ear is supposed to be located in the cochlea, and its actively echoing parts are the basilar membrane and organ of Corti. These are stimulated in exact ratio by sound waves, which vibrate via the auditory nerve and auditory centre, and finally become tones and harmony.

In their crude state they recognize only certain intervals which make up nature's chord; but through training, these organs are capable of response to the most intricate harmonic combinations.

Whenever the primitive ear is approached by too complex or unusual harmonies, it will regard them as "queer" or "wrong," because the ear cannot assimilate them quickly, and cannot vibrate in sympathy with them. This is an experience that every music teacher has daily with children, when they meet specially dissonant chords in their music.

Therefore, folk-music, hymns and popular music, constructed according to this simple acoustic scheme of the ear—swinging pendulum-like between tonic and dominant—are enjoyed mostly by primitive listeners. Such music appeals to their natural qualifications. They put no particular strain upon the ear, they do not require any increased labor of this organ, and there is a perfect balance between incoming sensation, and out-going energy, and the primitive feeling-state of pleasure and enjoyment. There was a time when, according to J. J. Rousseau, music was supposed to be "the art of combining sounds so as to please the ear."

In speaking of music in a very general way, and also of its "enjoyment" by the untrained listener, we may divide it into two great classes, fast and slow, rhythmic and melodic, although this distinction is very loose and inaccurate, when applied to music of a higher class. Man, with that unfailing instinct for his feeling-states, unerringly and accurately connects with them the proper physical states. To him, fast music is adequate with increase of action, and an increase of joy; slow music is arrest of activity and ultimately, as we shall see later, will become the expression of sorrow.

The leaning toward and enjoying of one or the other depends entirely upon the predominance of either the rhythmic or melodic quality, and is dictated entirely by the personality of the listener. A man of strong vitality, forceful personality, possessing plenty of energy, will enjoy music of equivalent qualities, that is, lively music of strong rhythmic character. For rhythm is accent, accent is will, will is expression of personal strength, or work, which is the expression of joy in living.

If such a person lacks imagination, and he usually does, he will be fond of ragtime, which is nothing but rhythm and accent. But when imaginative, he might like good classical music, of strong rhythmic quality, and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, for instance, with its strong and all pervading two-time rhythm in glorious and endless variety, would strongly appeal to him. But even in this case, the principal "enjoyment" will come from the rhythmic element, while the harmonious and melodic beauties of the work may pass through his mind without leaving any perceptible trace in his consciousness.

Should the rhythm of a composition, on the other hand, change often and suddenly, as it does in many modern works, the primitive rhythmic sense of an untrained listener is not able to adjust itself to the quick changes; his rhythmical equilibrium is disturbed too often and he cannot follow, and consequently his enjoyment is impaired. The appeal of the complex music is "too much" for him, and therefore it does not give him the physical satisfaction, which is the only one he can get out of music.

By persons of much vitality and energetic temperament, and also by children, who always have a surplus of physical energy, "slow" music is but little "enjoyed." In such music the rhythmical quality is less apparent; often it is purposely veiled by the composer, through the use of compound meters, such as 6-8, 9-8, 12-8, which are again divided into smaller fractions (*Adagio*, Ninth Symphony, Beethoven, second part) until all trace of rhythm is obliterated and dissolved into endless streams of flowing melody.

In such meters the strongest accent, the "energy of the beginning," becomes too "far apart." It escapes the attention, and therefore ceases to stimulate physical motor action. Consequently, such music appeals to persons of little energy and low vitality. But as the emotional state it creates craves for a motor outlet just the same, and as the absence of rhythm prevents stimulation of any physical display, the outlet is directed into thought. People of less energetic temperament are generally imaginative and sentimental. With them such thoughts will easily develop into revery and dreaming, and as they aimlessly wander through the mind, they are apt to leave the main road and lose themselves in the many by-ways which they cross, and which lead into the far-away "long, long ago."

Following these paths of least resistance, and remaining unchecked, life's experiences of former days are awakened, and still more complete emotional states are created, which may assume such strength that the balance between stimulus and response (incoming and outgoing energy) is disturbed. All emotional states crave motor expression, and this so far retarded physical expression seeks, after all, relief, which it finds in sobbing and crying, and thus such music may impress itself upon the listener as being sad music.

However, it is not a case of crying because the music is sad, but the act of crying creates in the listener this illusion and this association will forever cling to that particular music and to all of the same kind.

Music itself is neither sad nor joyful. Music consists of rationally connected tones, vibrations of air, and all these may spread

from the auditory centre by way of sympathetic ganglia to other nerve centres and create associations. Music cannot interpret abstract ideas, nor illustrate concrete subjects, like poetry and painting. There is no definiteness in it, and that is its chief charm. But like that of all the other arts, its purpose is the creation of illusion. If music could produce a distinct sad or joyful effect, it would have to affect all people alike. This is not the case, as it may stir up one kind of response in one, and an entirely different one in somebody else. The same music may affect the same person differently at different times, according to the elated or depressed state of his feeling.

Neither is music directly the language of feeling. The inner life is mostly made up of experiences stored up in the emotional memory; and from this voices may answer, echo-like, the appeal of music. But that is merely indirectly, and the "power of music" exists only in and through the imagination.

The question is often asked: Who enjoys music more, the trained musician or the untrained layman? The answer is always in favor of the latter. The pleasure derived from music, is, first, physical, next emotional, and finally intellectual. But as the enjoyment is raised from the first two states to the highest plane, it loses in genuineness and intensity, for the application of the intellect means control, and curbing of feeling.

We often refer to the "musical sense" in man, which consists of appreciating rhythm and harmony and, in its highest development with the serious composer, of the ability to think in tones. This sense is not an organic one, but one of the acquired facilities of the human race. Music itself is a matter of invention, and, like all other acquired faculties, has experienced constant improvement from generation to generation.

As it rose slowly from the simple to the complex, the sense of hearing kept pace with it, and rose from a state of purely isolated physical reaction to tone waves to the ability to connect this reaction with other centres, and finally to the state of pure intellectualism in the hyper-modern music. This process, which has taken centuries to be perfected in the human race, is daily reproduced in much shorter time in the musical education of the individual.

With the musician, aside from the always present danger of satiation, the enjoyment soon becomes a matter of intellectual labor, which of course is also a pleasure, but one of less intensity. He also, and perhaps more so, recreates, while listening, but not with that abounding pleasure of the primitive listener.

There also enters an entirely new factor into his enjoyment; his thematic memory. Jouvier says rightly: "*La musique c'est la fête du mémoire*," for the ultimate and highest enjoyment of serious music depends entirely upon an alert and correct memory. Unless one can retain the different musical motives out of which, for instance, a symphonic movement is built up, recognize them when they reappear, follow them through the different instruments of the orchestra, forever unconsciously comparing, recognizing their rhythmic, harmonic and moody changes, the full appreciation of such a composition is impossible.

But this very memory which gives the musician such a complete insight into the work is very apt to develop into purely intellectual and analytical labor, causing interference with his enjoyment; or, to use a popular phrase, "the heart remains empty." In such a case, the musician does not stand before the great mystery in its total, as the layman does, but he sees the work built up piecemeal, and thus loses the superior total effect. Perhaps the whole question here is that of "blissful ignorance."

If we ask who enjoys music more, the man who listens to a symphony or the man who listens to trivial music, the answer is, that he enjoys music most who listens to music best fitted to his personality—the word personality, taken in the widest possible sense, the sum total of his physical, mental and social qualities. It does not make any difference whether this best-fitted music be a Brahms symphony, a trivial ragtime tune or a sentimental ditty.

The man who enjoys music most intensely is the man who has lived a rich life, who has stored away in his mind's treasure-house vast experiences of sorrow and joy, and whose sympathetic attitude to the world around him keeps his mind open to receive the many stimuli that come from everywhere; who lets them penetrate into the transliminal abyss of his sub-consciousness and bring forth the old joys again to gladden his heart, the old sorrows to dim again his eyes, and indulge in the luxury of past grief.

In this sense we may then speak, but indirectly only, of music as "the language of the soul" and as "communication from soul to soul." The works of our great composers are the mirrors of their lives; what they proclaim in their works are the joys and sorrows they have experienced, not as composers, but as human beings, who feel and suffer as you and I.

And when, in the overwhelming stress of inspiration, their emotions cried imperatively for utterance, they wrote down what lived in them, and thus invited the whole world to participate and

share in their joys and troubles. But what they wrote was there before it was expressed, and it can appeal only to that which is in man when this message reaches him.

Taste and enjoyment are relative, personal, individual: *chaqu'un à son "tempérament."* The recipe for the greatest enjoyment of music is to live, to work, to suffer and to enjoy; for a rich, full life is the best resonance board for music.

# BEETHOVEN'S "LEONORE" AND "FIDELIO"

By EDGAR ISTELE

**W**HILE Mozart, the most universal genius in Music, entering between Gluck and Beethoven, was permitted to aspire to the wreaths of both the Dramatist and the Symphonist, Beethoven's fame is quite as peculiarly based on his—in the widest sense of the term—symphonic works as that of Gluck on his dramatic compositions. Everything else that Beethoven wrote rightly occupies the background in contrast with his sonatas, quartets, and symphonies, with the sole exceptions of his solemn mass and the opera "Fidelio," which of right should be entitled "Leonore." Only once did Beethoven write an opera, but this one essay placed him in the ranks of the very greatest in the realm of stage-composers, beside Gluck and Mozart, and before Weber and Wagner.

But slightly impressed by Gluck, and repelled—in accordance with his lofty ethical conception of love—by what he considered to be Da Ponte's too frivolous libretti for Mozart, Beethoven sought for an art-work of a tenor similar to that of the loftier portions of "The Magic Flute." Besides, he exceedingly admired Cherubini, whose opera "Les deux journées" had such striking success from 1800 onward that even Goethe (in "Dichtung und Wahrheit") observed that, in this opera, "perhaps the most felicitous subject is treated, that we have ever seen on the stage," and lauded this same opera to Eckermann as especially good "because it could be heard with pleasure even without music." "This important matter of a good groundwork (continues Goethe, according to Eckermann) is either not realized by composers, or they find no expert poets to second them with good subjects skillfully presented. Certain it is, that I can really enjoy an opera only when its subject is as well wrought as the music, so that the one keeps pace with the other."

It was a most remarkable conjunction that no other than the clever theatre manager and judge of human nature, Schikaneder, inspired Beethoven with the idea of writing an opera, and therewith to enter into direct rivalry with Cherubini's operas, then in high favor in Vienna. Whether Schikaneder also called his

attention to the Leonore subject, is uncertain, but quite probable. In any event, it can not have been mere chance that prompted Beethoven, to whom that subject was evidently confided by a man in close touch with the stage, to choose a libretto which not only bears a strong resemblance to Cherubini's most celebrated opera, but actually derives from the author of the Cherubini libretto.

Jean-Nicolas Bouilly (1763-1842), for a time a favorite French dramatist, who was jocularly termed "the tearful poet" (*poète lachrymal*), filled the post of "Administrateur" of a Department during the Terror of the French Revolution, and in his *Memoirs* relates how he frequently aided the wives of imprisoned nobles to free their husbands through heroic efforts. Thereafter he wrote, from personal experience, the two librettos for "Les deux journées" (for Cherubini) and (earlier in point of time) "Léonore, ou l'Amour conjugal," to which a now forgotten composer, Pierre Gaveaux (1761-1825), wrote the first music. In this shape the work was produced at Paris on Feb. 19, 1798. Beethoven was doubtless acquainted with this music, for Gaveaux's score was found in his literary remains. Formerly it was often asserted that Beethoven was influenced by Ferdinand Paër's successful opera, produced at Dresden on Oct. 4, 1804, written in the Italian language and likewise adapted from Bouilly's libretto. But we now know positively that Beethoven had already begun with his composition before Paër's opera came out, and that his German librettist utilized the original French book exclusively. In this connection Berlioz was fond of telling a pretty anecdote which Ferdinand Hiller is said to have heard from Paër himself, and according to which Beethoven exclaimed to Paër, who was seated beside him at the production of the latter's "Leonore," "Oh, how beautiful, how interesting! I must compose that!" If this story is really true, and not invented by the facetious Paër himself, it is likely that Beethoven did not so express himself to Paër at the production of "Leonore" (which was not given in Vienna until 1809), but at the performance of a funeral march of Paër's, said to have moved Beethoven to write the Dead March in the "Eroica." At all events, Berlioz was right in observing, "What has become of Gaveaux's and Paër's 'Leonores'?" They came, and went; for, of the three Leonores, the score of the first is weak, that of the second barely a work of talent, the third a composition of genius.

Bouilly relates that the subject of his "Leonore" is drawn from the life; a lady of Touraine set free her imprisoned husband by "a deed of the loftiest heroism" (in which Bouilly was



fortunately able to assist her), similar to Leonore's freeing of her Florestan. It was only to avoid arousing hostility that Bouilly shifted the scene of action to Spain; and at the first production of the piece (with Gaveaux's music), which took place during the revolutionary period, the subject was designated, with intent to mystify, as "an historical Spanish incident." That which breathes the breath of immortal life into the work, and inspired Beethoven to his sublimest harmonies, is the lifelike presentation of the drama, which made of an otherwise not precisely eminent poet a soul-seer. Bouilly's poem, of moderate effect in a mediocre musical setting, revealed its meaning only in the moment when Beethoven proclaimed in tones what words fail to convey.

The groundwork of the action is extremely simple. A nobleman, Florestan, had been privily thrown into prison by his powerful rival, Pizarro, because he proposed to disclose the latter's crimes to the Minister. Pizarro, deceiving the Minister by a tale of Florestan's demise, had himself appointed Governor of the prison in which Florestan languished. But the keen instinct of Florestan's wife succeeds in discovering the hidden dungeon. Clad as a youth, she wins the confidence of the honest, faithful turnkey, Rocco, and thus finally succeeds in penetrating, as his helper, to the lowermost of the secret cells, where Florestan is held captive. But the Governor, warned by a friend of a sudden visit of inspection by the Minister, who has grown suspicious, designs to kill Florestan with Rocco's aid before the Minister's arrival; and, when Rocco refuses to be his tool, decides to stab the weakened, helpless prisoner himself. But Leonore, who, as Rocco's assistant, had been forced to dig the grave destined for Florestan in the cell, rushes at the tyrant with the cry, "First kill his wife!" and when he makes to stab her also, points a pistol at him. At this instant of intensest suspense the watchman posted on the tower by the Governor heralds the Minister's approach by a fanfare on his trumpet. Now Florestan and Leonore are saved, for the humane turnkey Rocco, whose heart had long before been won by the supposed youth, is moved by Leonore's self-sacrifice to take her part. The Minister learns the truth, sets at liberty his friend Florestan and his spouse, and gives orders for the punishment of Pizarro, who is thrown into Florestan's dungeon until the King shall pass judgment on him. With this principal action, a little secondary plot is interwoven; Leonore, under her masculine name of Fidelio, had awakened the love of the turnkey's daughter Marzelline; but she is satisfied,

after all, to marry the doorkeeper Jaquino, her admirer for a long while.

In its quite direct development this action, just because of its simplicity, is an uncommonly happy subject for an opera, whose effect is not nullified by the intervention—more or less as a *deus ex machina*—of the Minister. His coming is well motivated and is not felt as unexpected, though of course at the moment when the fanfare sounds the unsuspecting onlooker is not thinking of him. But through this very fact the intensest dramatic effect is obtained, and the instant when Leonore, pistol in hand, rushes towards the Governor, while the famous fanfare resounds without, is one of the most powerful scenes that musico-dramatic literature has ever produced. Contrasted with Gluck's *Alceste* (who, to rescue her spouse, braves the terrors of Orcus), Leonore's deed is truer to life and of far greater effect, "more modern," so to say, because the frightfulness of Hades does not affect us, whereas Florestan's sombre subterranean dungeon moves us to deepest sympathy.

Beethoven—as he said even on his deathbed—cared to compose only such opera-texts as that of Cherubini's "Watercarriers" or Spontini's "Vestalin," that is, subjects of an elevated and morally wholesome type; and so this drama, akin to the "Watercarriers," but far surpassing it in loftiness of motive, was bound to impress him powerfully. And Beethoven was not so unfamiliar with the theatre as is generally believed. In Bonn he already held the post of theatre-accompanist on the "cembalo," and even assisted at the rehearsal of two works by Gluck; later, in Vienna (1793–1802), he was a pupil in vocal composition of Antonio Salieri (1750–1825), of whom Gluck had said that he was the only one who had learned from him; therefore it is not improbable that Beethoven was also influenced—at least indirectly—by Gluck, more especially as the Cherubini-Spontini school deriving from Gluck was so congenial to him. Besides, Beethoven frequently attended the operatic performances at Vienna.

Beethoven's ballet "Prometheus" (*Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*; Vienna, 1801) was probably the immediate cause that led the theatrical expert Schikaneder to make Beethoven the proposition that he should compose an opera; and there is no doubt, that the composition of that work was a good preliminary study for Beethoven the dramatist.

Fortunately, the literary adaptation of the subject-matter was not the work of Schikaneder, but of his successor, Joseph Sonnleithner (1766–1835), from 1804 Court Theatre Secretary

in Vienna, a man well versed in letters and music. Sonnleithner substantially only translated the Bouilly libretto into very acceptable, singable verses, without on the whole making too many changes. To be sure, his division into three acts was unfavorable, Bouilly's version having but two (and Beethoven's opera finally conformed to this latter). The first act ended with the trio "Gut, Söhnchen, gut"; the second act began with the march and closed with the scene in which Pizarro admonishes his soldiers to be watchful; the third act corresponded with the definitive second act, beginning in the prison, but ending without a change of scene, the dénouement being brought about in the prison itself. It is apparent that the later conclusion with three scenes—courtyard, prison-cell, and terrace of the castle—is preferable, if only for the reason that the bright colors of the jubilant castle-music are out of place in the gloomy dungeon. The exposition, too, in its cheery, ballad-opera style, is at present (as in 1804) transferred from the sombre prisonyard in which Bouilly lays the scene into a homelike middle-class interior.

Beethoven eagerly set to work on the composition; his sketches for the opera, though only half of them are extant, fill 346 16-line music-sheets<sup>1</sup>; by the Spring of 1805 he had outlined the greater part of the work. How carefully the Master proceeded is shown by the circumstance, that he sketched Leonore's aria "Komm, Hoffnung" no fewer than eighteen times, and similarly the beginning of the Florestan aria "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen," and that he was continually rewriting the choral finale. Any one who would make a study of Beethoven's way of working—so different from Mozart's!—must have recourse to this sketch-book, which affords invaluable insight into Beethoven's workshop, and compare it with Dr. Erich Prieger's edition of the opera "Leonore" after the original text (Breitkopf & Härtel, 1905).—As a supplement to this latter the same firm has published separately the original version (in C major) of Marzelline's aria "O wär' ich schon mit dir vereint."

Beethoven is the sole great composer to leave sketches so extensive in scope to posterity. In contrast with Mozart, he worked slowly and painfully. His thoughts, thrown out like volcanic eruptions, had to be turned again and again before taking on their definitive shape. Their first form is sometimes such, that one can hardly conceive how a master of Beethoven's rank could invent anything so primitive. As the admirable editor of

<sup>1</sup>Cf. G. Nottebohm's publication, "Zweite Beethoveniana" (1887), a sketch-book dating from 1804.

Beethoven's sketch-books, G. Nottebohm, observes, the ways of Beethoven the creator are a mystery to us. This mystery, however we approach it, lies in the wrestling of the Master with his *dæmon*, in his struggle with his genius. The *dæmon*, indeed, once dwelt in the sketch-books, but he has vanished. The mind that dictated the work does not appear in the sketches; they do not reveal the law to which Beethoven yielded himself in his creative mood. They can afford no conception of the Idea, which is made manifest only in the art-work itself. We perceive only disconnected details, not the entire process of creation. The organic development of the art-work is not to be learned from the sketches. Hence, these sketches can contribute neither to our understanding of nor to our delight in the art-work, and yet they are surpassingly eloquent, would we comprehend Beethoven the artist. For the sketches tell us something that the finished art-work withholds—must withhold, in fact, to present itself as a perfect work of art. We shall, therefore, be obliged to bring forward the sketches when the turning-point of the drama is reached.

In its original form the opera "Leonore" (or—as it was called by the theatre management, contrary to Beethoven's wishes, in order to avoid confounding it with Paër's opera—"Fidelio, oder die eheliche Liebe") was brought out in the Schauspielhaus an der Wien on Nov. 20, 1805. In consequence of unfavorable political and artistic conditions, its success was slight; only two repetitions followed. The French had just occupied Vienna, so that the audience was composed in its majority of French officers; and Beethoven, who conducted the performance (he was not a good conductor), was sadly exasperated by the orchestra. Even a Leonore as eminent vocally—though histrionically ungifted—as Anna Milder-Hauptmann could not save the work, which disappeared after a few performances. Mozart's brother-in-law, the basso Sebastian Meyer, a remarkably fine Sarastro, sang the rôle of Pizarro, and complained—not without reason—that Beethoven had treated the voice-parts with so little consideration, and had learned nothing from Mozart in this particular. According to Schindler's report, Beethoven, in order to throw Meyer out, had intentionally written a passage in Pizarro's aria—to be found only in the original version—in such a manner that it was almost impossible for the vocalist to sing it correctly because of the chromatic suspensions in the accompaniment. However, Beethoven had this passage, ostensibly altered for one particular singer, printed as altered; so it is likely—and this is characteristic of him

as a dramatist—that he considered the passage essential for the characterization of the inflexible Pizarro. It was stricken out only when the act-close was changed.

At all events it is certain that "Leonore" was received with little enthusiasm by contemporaries. Apart from many an unintelligent criticism, due to the astonishing newness of inspired flights, the reproach of excessive length and superfluous text-repetitions, besides the awkward leading of the vocal parts, was evidently well founded, for Beethoven, heeding the counsel of well-intentioned friends, was soon forced to decide on making far-reaching alterations in these particulars. After Dr. Prieger had rediscovered the long lost original version, the Berlin Opera House brought out "Leonore" on Nov. 20, 1805, in the form and on the centenary of its first production. The work was given in three acts. The first begins with Marzelline's aria, "O wär' ich schon mit dir vereint," which occupies second place in "Fidelio"; then comes the cheery duet, "Jetzt, Schätzchen, jetzt sind wir allein," with which the later "Fidelio" begins. The third number, an insignificant trio between Marzelline, Jaquino and Rocco, was expunged by Beethoven himself. The famous quartet, "Mir ist so wunderbar," Rocco's aria, "Hat man nicht auch Gold daneben," and the trio, "Gut, Söhnchen, gut," are the remaining constituent parts of the first act, which—and most opportunely—does not yet lead into the dramatic conflict proper, but forms a sort of introduction in comedy-opera style, with nearly exclusive bearing on the secondary plot. The principal action opens only with the second act; it commences with the march of the prisoners, brings in Pizarro's aria with chorus (in a different version), the duet in which Pizarro persuades Rocco, and thereafter a dramatically and psychologically impossible duet between Marzelline and Leonore (Marzelline rhapsodizes of her future wedded bliss with Fidelio!), later excised by Beethoven. Leonore's great aria, that now begins with the recitative "Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?" had a different beginning, and ended with excessively difficult coloratura passages. Entirely dissimilar is the arrangement of the finale, in which the above-mentioned unsingable passage for Pizarro was found. A grand aria for Pizarro, with chorus, forms the act-close. The third act, which plays throughout in the dungeon, introduces Florestan's aria in a decidedly different form; after the A-major Adagio there follows, instead of the Allegro close of such extreme difficulty for the singer, a tranquil F-minor lyric, "Ach, es waren schöne Tage." Of importance, too, is the recitative preceding the duet "O namenlose Freude," with its expressive

solo oboe. Finally, in this revival (as emphasized in the reports) the solemn ensemble, "Gott, welch ein Augenblick," was regarded as a conception of loftiest artistic inspiration (the melody, originally set to the words "Da stiegen die Menschen ans Licht," was transferred by Beethoven from a youthful work composed in Bonn, the funeral cantata for Joseph II, written in 1790). Generally speaking, the impressions persisting after the revival of "Leonore" in the original form may be summarized as follows: The earlier version can not, of course, supersede the definitive one, but may well maintain itself beside the latter. In the majority of details we must award the preference to Beethoven's latest revision; on the other hand, the Master unhappily relinquished certain beauties found in "Leonore," which we regretfully miss in "Fidelio." Among these we note, above all, the close of the Florestan aria, the moving recitative before the duet of the spouses, and the slow movement in the closing chorus—wonderful beauties which arouse more than an historical interest. In style, "Leonore" is indubitably more homogeneous than the latest version, which bears the impress of Beethoven's several stylistic periods.

The ill success of the first production caused some of Beethoven's friends familiar with matters theatrical to induce him to make sweeping excisions. A memorable conference, lasting from 7 o'clock in the evening till 2 the next morning, was held at the palace of Prince Lichnowsky, whose lady took charge of the piano-part; and now began a mighty struggle with the Master, concerning which the tenor singer Röckel (the father of Richard Wagner's friend) gives a detailed account. The poet Collin (author of "Coriolanus," to which Beethoven wrote the celebrated overture) and Breuning represented the dramaturgic side, and Röckel and the basso Meyer the vocal. Beethoven defended every measure with lion-like intrepidity, the upshot being that whole numbers had to be cut. But when Meyer launched a special attack upon the Pizarro aria (as preserved in the original version), saying that no one could sing it with effect, Beethoven lost his temper. Finally he promised to compose a new aria for Pizarro (this is the one now marked No. 7 in "Fidelio"), and the Prince at last succeeded in persuading Beethoven to consent to the "tentative" omission of the discarded numbers at the new performance of the opera. On this occasion the rôle of Florestan was assigned to Röckel. All that Röckel, who was then still in possession of the now untraceable manuscript (in Beethoven's own handwriting) of the voice-part, otherwise relates about

alterations, does not agree with the other accounts handed down to us, as Otto Jahn has pointed out. Those desirous of studying "Leonore" in its *second* form are referred to Jahn's arrangement published by Breitkopf in 1852, with which, however, they should compare Prieger's arrangement of the *first* version, published half a century later.

One point is beyond dispute: However excellent, *dramatically*, the advice given Beethoven at Lichnowsky's may have been, violence was done him *musically* in some cases, and the cuts were of such a nature that another, more careful reconstruction of the work was needed. In the second version, concerning whose abbreviations, as compared with the first, we need not go into further details (for this second version is a mere phase in the transition to the definitive form), the work reappeared as "Fidelio," but in two acts, on March 29, 1806, and experienced four repetitions. This time the production—a very mediocre one, withal—took place with great success before a select audience, and criticism spoke well of it, besides. Only the overture—this time it was the celebrated Third—proved to be a stumbling-block; there were complaints of "incessant dissonances," "overmultiplied buzzing of the violins"; and it was called a work of artifice rather than of true art.

In this connection a word must be said with regard to the complicated relations of the several versions. Nowadays we name the work, in its first and second versions, "Leonore"; for us, "Fidelio" is the title of the definitive form (of 1814). We call the E-major overture (the one written last) the "Fidelio" overture; the "Leonore" overtures are the three that Beethoven wrote for the two earlier versions. How there came to be three of them, we shall now explain.

The overture played at the première in 1805 is the one known at present as "Leonore Overture No. 2." It was characterized as too diffuse, and too difficult for the wind-instruments, and Beethoven therefore replaced it by the so-called "Third Leonore Overture," which was played at the revival of the work in the year 1806. In reality this overture is only a working-over of the earlier one; themes and arrangements are identical, but the working-out and modulatory design are different. It is remarkable, merely as a matter of construction, that in the "second" overture Beethoven required no fewer than 355 measures for developing his musical train of thought as far as the famous trumpet fanfare, but only 234 in the "third." None the less, the "second," as heard occasionally in concert-halls, possesses certain advantages;

it is, perhaps, more directly emotional, whereas the later overture is more masterfully "elaborated." Of peculiar interest is the transformation which the trumpet signal<sup>1</sup>, representing the turning-point of the drama, underwent. In the "second" Leonore overture it reads:



But in the prison-scene in the first version of the opera it appears in the following form:



It is most familiar as given in the "third" Leonore overture:



where its construction conforms to that of the prison-scene in the score of the second version of the opera. The beginning of the fanfare in the prison-scene of the last "Fidelio" version (without slurs in the second measure!) reads differently:



In the "second" overture Beethoven inserted a reminiscence of the Allegro theme between the two trumpet-calls. Then, after the second fanfare, came a suggestion of the Florestan aria, followed quite abruptly by the famous passage for the violins, which later ushered in the Presto.

In the "great" (third) overture all this is changed. Here Beethoven reaches directly into the drama itself, taking therefrom

<sup>1</sup>Originally it was not written with bars, but these were introduced later by Beethoven. It is a military signal, and therefore not to be played "feelingly"!



the orchestral theme that sounds to the theme "Ach, du bist gerettet" (Ah, thou art saved!), thus taking over what might be called the "theme of salvation" into the orchestra. It is just this intensely emotional episode which wins such high favor for the Leonore Overture No. 3. Richard Wagner, in particular, held this "marvelous" overture in high regard: "far from furnishing a mere musical introduction to the drama, in itself it presents this drama more completely and movingly than we find it in the ensuing disjointed stage action. This work is not simply an overture, but in itself a most powerful drama."

The fundamental idea of the overture may well be symbolized by the sentence "through dark to dawn" (*per aspera ad astra*). In the introduction we distinctly hear the sighing of the imprisoned Florestan in the strains of the theme of his aria. But Love, mounting strong and full of hope, knocks at his dungeon and rushes vehemently (*Allegro*) into action. It is Leonore herself, the noble woman (second theme in E major), who comes to the rescue. Despite all hindrances she penetrates into the prison, offers battle to the monster himself—then, at the moment when need is highest, God is highest; the signal of deliverance heralds the advent of the rescuer. Profoundly affected, all harken to the call, that resounds once again. A repetition of the principal theme—in a purely symphonic sense—finally leads into exultant rejoicing; the victory of Goodness over Evil is complete, and an imposing pæan of liberation closes the mighty composition.

Contrasted with this "third" overture and its no less distinguished sister, the "second," the other two overtures are in a difficult position. The so-called "first"—nominally Op. 138, but this number was arbitrarily chosen after Beethoven's death—was not written until 1807, especially for the Prague theatre, for which the two preceding overtures were impracticable. This overture, not generally known before the composer's decease, and misnamed the "first," has nothing in common with the two other Leonore overtures but the theme of the Florestan aria. This rather insignificant overture is never played before the opera, and only occasionally in the concert-hall, and possesses no features calling for special observations. Of greater importance is the so-called "Fidelio" overture (in E major), which Beethoven, without thematic borrowing from the opera, wrote in 1814 for the definitive version of the work. Historically considered, this overture is a step backward, for it retreats from the advanced positions won by Gluck's "Iphigénie" overture and Mozart's "Don Giovanni" overture, which the two great overtures (Nos. 2 and 3) maintain.

However, in its light-hearted insouciance it is in so far a better introduction to the opera than the imposing "third" Leonore overture, as it does not anticipate—and thus weaken—the most telling stage-effects, but simply prepares the hearers for the ingenuous comedy-opera scenes of the first act. Only as from afar off does it intimate, in a lovely adagio theme, aught of stern or tragic import. So nowadays we are accustomed to playing this overture regularly on beginning the opera, and have given up substituting the third Leonore overture for it. But even in the theatre the public does not like to forgo the hearing of this masterwork, and therefore strange expedients have been sought. Otto Nicolai, the composer of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," first employed the third Leonore overture as an interlude between the two acts of "Fidelio"—which is even more ruinous to the effect. Furthermore, when this is done, the jubilant close of the overture stands in impossible contrast to the following gloomy prison-scene. Hans von Bülow later played the overture as an epilogue after the opera, advancing as his reason for so doing Wagner's declaration that this overture is no "overture" at all, but an ideal summing-up of the opera—a somewhat doctrinaire justification. Finally, beginning as early as the 'fifties, and again more recently under Mahler and Mottl in Vienna and Munich, the overture has been played to accompany the change of scene between the two divisions of the second act—the change from the dungeon to the castle-terrace. This solution—unless we prefer to limit the Leonore overture exclusively to the concert-hall—is evidently by far the best. In this way neither the effect of the drama is anticipated nor, after the action is finished, is the entire drama symphonically presented for the second time. Thus, before the drama itself reaches the *dénouement*, our attention is concentrated on its principal features, and through the jubilant close we are adequately prepared for the final outcome. From the side of stage-mechanics, too, this placing of the overture is much to be recommended on account of the shifting of the scenes.

Beethoven's opera in its second—hardly acceptable—version would have been done for and forgotten, had it not been resuscitated in 1814 by an exceptional event. Three "governors" of the Court Opera were to have a benefit-performance, for which the selection of the work was left to them, but with the proviso that no extra expense should be incurred. Beethoven's opera again came to mind, and the Master declared himself willing to furnish the material if he were permitted to make a thorough-going revision. As collaborator he secured his friend Friedrich

Treitschke, who, as an opera-poet and stage-manager, was the right man to remodel Sonnleithner's book, with the author's permission. Treitschke was the first to conceive the happy idea of transferring the prison-scene into the open air. Further, according to his own account, Treitschke made the following changes. The scene of the entire first act was set in the courtyard (this for the second time, for such was Bouilly's original direction); the duet, which has a livelier effect as opening number, was placed at the beginning, and Marzeline's aria in second place; Leonore's grand aria was reconstructed; and, finally, Treitschke agreed with Beethoven upon another act-close—the return of the prisoners at Pizarro's command and their plaint on reincarceration.

The second act (so Treitschke relates) presented a great difficulty at the very outset. Beethoven, for his part, desired to signalize poor Florestan by an aria, while I raised the objection that a man who was almost starved to death could not possibly sing *bravura*. We tried one thing after another; at last, in his opinion, I hit the nail on the head. I wrote some lines descriptive of the final upflaming of life before extinguishment: "Und spür' ich nicht linde, sanft säuselnde Lüfte," etc. No sooner was the aria written than I handed it to Beethoven. He read it, paced up and down the room, mumbled and hummed as was his wont, instead of singing, and then tore the fortepiano open. He laid the text before him and began wonderful phantasies which, alas! no magic art could hold fast. Out of them he appeared to conjure up the motif of the aria. Hours slipped by, but Beethoven went on improvising. The evening meal, which he was to enjoy with us, was put on table—he paid no attention to it. It was late when he embraced me, left his supper in the lurch, and hastened home. Next day the admirable piece was finished.

Nearly all the other changes in the second act were confined to abbreviations and reversifications. The quartet "Er sterbe!" was interrupted at Treitschke's instance by a brief pause during which Jaquino together with others announces the arrival of the Minister and prevents the consummation of the murder by calling Pizarro away. After the succeeding duet Rocco conducted Florestan and Leonore to an audience with the Minister. (The original stage-directions, just before the duet, read thus: Pizarro rushes off, Rocco after him, Leonore tries to hold him back, he wrenches the pistol from her, with a cry she falls in a faint.) Leonore then gradually rallies in a recitative preceding the duet, and Rocco explains and justifies his behavior at the very end of the work. Beethoven wrote to Treitschke that he had read his emendations with great pleasure, and had been influenced thereby "to restore the ruins of an old castle." But he speedily found "this whole affair of the opera the most laborious imaginable. I am dissatisfied

with the greater part of it, and there is hardly a single number in which I should not have to patch up my present dissatisfaction with some little satisfaction. But there is a vast difference between a case like this and the ability to abandon oneself to free meditation or inspiration."

On the 23rd of May, 1814, the première of the definitive "Fidelio" (Beethoven himself had now accepted this appellation) took place with great applause, the Master conducting in person. As the new E-major overture was not ready in time, the Prometheus overture was played. The E-major overture did not assume its place until after the second performance.

From this date onward, "Fidelio" found its way not only into the German opera-repertory, but soon into that of foreign theatres also, more especially after the gifted Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient (1804-1860, daughter of Friedrich Schroeder, the creator of Don Giovanni in German) had, in the truest sense of the term, *created* the rôle of Leonore (November, 1822), which up to that time had merely been sung, but not convincingly impersonated. Among the audience sat Beethoven, whose sparkling eyes, shining from out the cloak wherein he had wrapped himself, followed the singer unswervingly from his seat just behind the conductor, his gaze fairly fascinating her.

Although unable to hear a single note, his enthusiasm was so aroused by her acting that he promised to write a new opera especially for her. Beethoven did not keep his promise, but another came and wrote operas especially for the wonderful cantrix—Richard Wagner. What an important influence the impersonation of Leonore by the Schroeder-Devrient had upon Wagner and his creations, could already be gathered from the enthusiastic description of her performance found in Wagner's fanciful tale, "A Pilgrimage to Beethoven": "This singer seemed to have wedded herself in early youth to the genius of Beethoven. How glowingly, how poetically, with what profound effect, did she present this extraordinary woman! She has won the glory of revealing Beethoven's work to the German public. . . . For my own part, heaven was opened wide; I was transfigured, and worshipped the genius who had led me—like Florestan—out of darkness and fetters into daylight and freedom." Even more significant is the description in Wagner's great autobiography, "Mein Leben."

A marvel suddenly gave my artistic emotionality a new impulse, decisive for my entire life. This was a short 'starring' season of Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient, then<sup>1</sup> at the zenith of her artistic career—

<sup>1</sup>He is speaking of the period shortly after Beethoven's death.

youthful, beautiful and ardent as no other woman I have since seen on the stage. She appeared in 'Fidelio.' When I look back on my whole life, I find scarcely any event which, as regards its effect on myself, can be compared with this. Whoever bears a memory of this wonderful woman at this period of her life, must in some wise be able to testify to the well-nigh demonic glow wherewith the creative feats of this incomparable artist infallibly inundated him, so full of human ecstasy were they. After the performance I wrote a brief letter informing the great artist in so many words that to-day my life had taken on its true meaning, and that, should she sometime hear my name mentioned with applause in the world of art, she should remember that she had made me, on this evening, what I herewith vow to become. . . . When I came to Dresden in the year 1842, to make my début with *Rienzi*, and was a frequent visitor at the house of the kindly disposed artist, she surprised me one day by an exact recitation of my letter, which seemed to have made an impression on her, as she had actually preserved it.

Thus were woven the threads connecting Beethoven's "Fidelio" with the art of Richard Wagner. There are, in particular, two factors whose impulsion, above and beyond Mozart into the future of the romantic opera, were manifested with peculiar force in the interpretations of the Schroeder-Devrient; one of these factors concerns the singers, the other the orchestra. Beethoven was, above all, an instrumental composer and pianist, and, when carried away by the lofty flight of his imagination, could never rightly comprehend—as is proved by all his vocal works—that the human voice is no instrument, but a frail, tender organ, which ought to be treated with wise consideration and constant attention, as Mozart did. Beethoven's friend Schindler confirms this fact: "The habit of abandoning himself wholly to the impulse of his inspiration, limited solely by the laws of harmony and rhythm, and his knowledge of the nature of instruments—this habit, combined with his inability to produce a good tone himself, allows us to conjecture what struggles Beethoven must perforce have had with himself while composing this opera-score."

From conversations of Schindler with Cherubini we know that the latter, after hearing "Fidelio," lamented the fact that Beethoven had till then paid far too little attention to the study of vocal art, this being no fault of Beethoven's teacher, Salieri, for he himself had told Cherubini how he had fared with the self-willed Beethoven. For this reason Cherubini, who was ten years older than Beethoven, kindly presented him with a copy of the *Singing Method* of the Paris Conservatory, advising him to study it. So it had a place in Beethoven's library, but—according to Schindler's testimony—the Master never used it. "What could it have been (observes Schindler) that caused the singers

to complain and brought about vexatious conflicts? Beethoven's obstinate contention that what he had written was good and singable—that was the stumbling-block which neither diffident representations nor diplomatic negotiations had power to remove. Mme. Milder-Hauptmann related, among other matters, that she too had been hard put to it to maintain her ground against the Master, chiefly with regard to the awkward, unsingable passages in the Adagio of the aria in E major, so unsuited to her voice—and all without avail until in 1814 she declared positively that she would never again sing the aria in that form on the stage. That helped."

We of to-day may be grateful to the Milder-Hauptmann for having rid the part of Leonore of those wholly unmeaning, purely instrumental passages which Beethoven originally wrote, and against which Milder-Hauptmann protested. Even in the Adagio of the aria "Komm', Hoffnung" there were difficult roulades. But in "Fidelio" the main requisite was not, as formerly, "charming song," but ecstatically intensified expression, and here the Schroeder-Devrient was doubtless in her element. However, her style—especially under the influence of the similarly designed Wagner rôles, which likewise did violence to the voice in some cases—was misapprehended, and thus it came that Alfred von Wolzogen, biographer of the Schroeder-Devrient, could rightly observe:

The very fact that our present-day prima donnas can refer to such apostles as the Schroeder-Devrient in support of their much-applauded aberrations, is certainly most unfortunate; and the eternally immutable demand of good taste and a wholesome love of art that in the opera one ought, above all else, to hear *singing*, breaks powerless against the craze that has seized on the whole world. . . . The chief virtue of her singing resided in the intimate, soulfelt interpretation of the composition; the more delicate its texture, the more did one have to admire the resourcefulness wherewith she could set everything in its proper light.

Thus the Schroeder-Devrient stood on the grand divide between Beethoven and Wagner; a product of the old opera, she strove toward new ideals, but, misunderstood in her unwonted endeavor, she became the victim of an exaggerated imitation—precisely like Wagner, who himself in certain respects exaggerated the precedent set by Beethoven for the treatment of the orchestra and the relation between singer and orchestra.

The orchestral resources employed by Beethoven in "Fidelio" do not, in general, very greatly surpass those of Mozart in "Don Giovanni." The manner of bringing on the instruments exhibits

sagacious precaution. Thus, in the first five numbers of the score, Beethoven contents himself with the strings, the usual woodwind, and two horns. The trumpets, kettledrums and double-bassoon are not introduced until No. 6, the March of the Guards, infused with the sombre shades of the prison. On the other hand, in Leonore's grand aria (No. 9), Beethoven uses only three horns. Kettledrums and brass do not reëmerge before the Finale. Beethoven subjected himself to special restrictions with regard to the trombones, of which he employed but two—tenor and bass; he calls upon them solely for peculiarly blood-curdling effects, not for reinforcing the noise of a Tutti. All the more portentous is their occasional entrance during the duet between Rocco and Pizarro, and also in the Finale. For the rest, while Beethoven's orchestra is very similar to Mozart's in combination, it is entirely dissimilar in its employment; Beethoven's artistry in thematic work, most loftily developed in his symphonies, is shown here too in an interweaving of motives unknown in the earlier opera. He was the first to bring forward the orchestra as a coördinate factor, not merely as a subordinate accompaniment to the predominant singers. While this was a distinct advance at that time, it was fraught with peril for the future of the opera, for one step further, and the orchestra had proclaimed itself an autocrat.

The difference between Mozart's and Beethoven's treatment of the orchestra is exceptionally evident in the opening number, the seemingly so artless duet sung by the turnkey's daughter Marzelline and her hapless lover Jaquino, discarded for Fidelio. Outwardly quite in the Mozart style, it is yet more strongly influenced by Cherubini, whom Beethoven admired exceedingly as a dramatic composer, and from whose "Watercarriers" he even copied passages for his own study. (These passages, in a sketch-book owned by Joachim, are to be found side by side with excerpts from "The Magic Flute" and sketches for "Fidelio.") Herein the vocal melody is no longer supreme, but the unpretentious orchestral motive with which the number begins develops into leading control. This theme, representative in a way of Marzelline's feline evasion of her lover's clumsy wooing, bobs up like a kobold in every corner—now among the woodwind and anon among the strings, continually illustrating the action of the duet in delightful fashion. And so this number, otherwise quite in the traditional form, is turned into a comedy scene, to which, however, a most individual character is lent by the highly amusing interruptions (when the gate-keeper has to answer the repeated

knockings at the door). Whereas this first number is devoted in the main to a portrayal of the unfortunate lover Jaquino, the succeeding sentimental aria, something after the style of Mozart, is given up to a characterization of Marzelline who, at first so vivacious, is now grown sentimental. With these may be associated Rocco's aria in praise of "Gold," so aptly illustrating his easy-going, plebeian temperament. None of these numbers foreshadows, in its musical-comedy vein, the depth of the swiftly approaching tragedy. Not until the Quartet-Canon interpolated as No. 3, in which Leonore's voice is first heard in song, does the real tone-drama "Fidelio" begin. In this quartet four totally dissimilar emotions are expressed, through the Master's genius, by a single melody and its contrapuntal opposite. The way in which Beethoven utilized this set form for the expression of so various human feelings, is one of the greatest marvels of dramatic tonal art. Imagine the situation—first of all Leonore: "Wie gross ist die Gefahr, wie schwach der Hoffnung Schein!" and to aggravate her difficulties the distressful infatuation of Marzelline is superadded. But the latter, who fancies that Fidelio returns her affection, is lost in her love-dreams ("Mir ist so wunderbar"). There is Rocco, besides, the good-natured papa, who sees nothing but his daughter's future happiness, and wishes to have her wed Fidelio ("Sie liebt ihn, das ist klar"). And last of all, the discomfited wooer Jaquino, who comically expresses his exasperation: "Mir sträubt sich schon das Haar, der Vater willigt ein." When the four singers know how to fit the expression of their various emotions to the plastic melody of the canon, this number becomes one of the most thrilling and beautiful of the whole opera—indeed, it furnishes a key to all that follows, for in it Leonore's soullife is discovered for the first time. The succeeding "Gold" aria of Rocco is the last cheerful gleam in the work, whose interpretation, moreover, may easily be too tragic. For it belongs to the class of semi-serious opera (termed by the Italians *opera semiseria*), and Beethoven, the great humorist, well knew what he was about when, like Shakespeare, he set the sublime and tragic in dramatic contrast over against the humdrum existence of the commonalty. Lilli Lehmann, one of the best interpreters of Leonore, rightly observes, in her admirable "Studie zu Fidelio" (1904):

In any event, humor must nowhere be wanting in 'Fidelio,' excepting in loftily dramatic or tragic scenes. But humor is only too readily confounded, by those who are uneducated, inartistic, or prone to exaggeration, with comicality, and even not infrequently with low comedy, in an endeavor to win over the laughers. This is befitting to none of the



- characters in 'Fidelio.' By humor in 'Fidelio' I mean a refined cheeriness, a nonchalance in mood and tone, a friendly, lighthearted raillery such as one may, with all respect, allow oneself with others. All this can be expressed by Rocco with authority, by Leonore with feminine tact, by Marzelline with youthful naïveté, and by Jaquino with very specially delicate nuances at every opportunity that offers; and thereby, with the most natural means, a variety will be created whose favorable influence is felt throughout the opera.

The Terzet No. 5, a symphonically treated scene, carries the external and internal action rapidly forward. The same energetic violin-phrase that, at the beginning, characterized Leonore's stout-hearted resolution to descend into the dungeon with Rocco, is thematically repeated at Leonore's exclamation, powerfully supported by the wind-instruments: "Ich habe Mut!" A glowing melody by Marzelline and a rotund theme by Rocco follow after, and the first part of the drama ends, quite conventionally, with an expression of general happiness. Now there suddenly enters an unexpected modulation with Rocco's words, "Der Gouverneur"; a new difficulty starts up, for without Pizarro's permission Rocco may not even take his future son-in-law into the dungeon with him. Thus Leonore, within sight of the goal, is again at the mercy of her husband's deadly enemy. Her despairful voice now takes the lead in the midst of the number, which ends—more's the pity!—quite conventionally with an Allegro ("Nur auf der Hut, dann geht es gut").

Here, where the first act ended in the original version, a dividing-line is distinctly apparent. The exposition of the drama (exclusive of the characters of Pizarro and Florestan) is finished; the introductory comedy of everyday life is done, the really tragic action begins. If a change of scene now takes place, this is shown still more convincingly. Henceforward Leonore, Pizarro and Florestan are the principals, Rocco shrinks in importance, and both Marzelline and Jaquino retire into the background as subordinate characters. However, even for these last rôles, Lilli Lehmann properly demands first-class interpreters! "One does not act and sing any opera alone; all the performers share in the work, and it is their duty to do their parts and the work full justice, down to the least detail." Hence it is also of high importance that the spoken dialogue, in which the most significant matters are conveyed, should be managed with peculiar care. The abuse of half-learning the dialogue and repeating it after the prompter as best one may, must necessarily exercise a disturbing effect on the general presentation of such a masterwork as "Fidelio." The interpreters of the lesser rôles must realize to

the full what their words, accents, attitudes and gestures signify for their co-actors. Leonore, as Lilli Lehmann remarks, has to lay strong emphasis on her prose. "But how absurd such emphasis seems when nothing at all has gone before to justify these bursts of emotion, or when Leonore is obliged to subdue her outbursts to such a degree that they pass over quite without effect." To carry oneself at the right time as a principal, or, as the case may be, a subordinate character, is the great, or rather the greatest art on the stage, and assuredly in real life as well.

After a peculiar processional march of the guards, apparently beginning with a weak beat on the dominant, the Governor, Pizarro, makes his appearance. A letter from a friend warns him of the Minister's visit of inspection, and in an aria (No. 7), which admittedly is quite in the style of the theatre-villains of early Italian opera, he announces his determination to make away with Florestan without delay. The subdued Chorus of Guards ("Er spricht von Tod und Wunden"), however textually nonsensical, can make a most weirdly thrilling effect if properly handled. Pizarro makes his arrangements (in the dialogue), laying stress on his order—in general terms—that a "signal" is to be given instantly when the Minister's equipage is sighted. This is in preparation for the celebrated trumpet fanfare in the next act. Of equal importance with these external measures for Pizarro is his security within. Therefore, in a duet (No. 8), a superb scene, he seeks to win over Rocco by means of gold and persuasive words. What sinister effect characterizes the word "Morden!" and the dagger-thrust, supported by the trombones: "Ein Stoss, und er verstummt!"

Rocco, wholly the subaltern employee, while promising his assistance in doing away with the "evil-disposed subject," protests that it is not his duty to do the killing himself. So Rocco is only to dig the grave; Pizarro will carry out the murder. Rocco quiets his conscience with the reflection that death will bring release to the half-starved prisoner.

The next-following scene of Leonore, the recitative and aria No. 9 ("Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?"), is a powerful solo number revealing Leonore's masterful character. Originally an *aria di bravura*, in its present form it is a complete emotional exposition of the drama. Indeed (as Kufferath expresses himself in his excellent French study of "Fidelio"), it contains "the entire drama in epitome" (*tout le drame en raccourci*). This is the more astonishing, because the piece follows, in its form, the model of the classic aria throughout, Beethoven's genius

employing this form here for the expression of a mighty spiritual conflict. This number makes enormous demands on breath-control, connected musical phrasing, and a wise apportionment of energy. One is inclined to agree with Lilli Lehmann that Beethoven instrumented the close of the aria too thinly; but whether or how this should be reinforced, with due respect, is a question.

The remarkably dramatic finale consists of four chief divisions; first, a prisoners' chorus, joyously welcoming the sunlight; then the scene between Rocco and Leonore, who learns that she will be permitted to descend into the dungeon that very day. Most admirable is the contrast here between Leonore's momentary outbreak of joy in her hope of seeing Florestan again, and her reception of the terrible tale of his fate. How portentous the thrill of the solemnly harmonized trombones—their first entrance!—at the words: "Wir beide graben nur sein Grab." There follows an affecting *Andante con moto* in E major, whose tone-color is determined by clarinets and bassoons, with flutes and oboes sighing above; here the emotions of Leonore and Rocco, confronted with this fearful task, find expression. The next two scenes, preparing and bringing about Pizarro's reappearance, lead into the Finale proper; at Pizarro's command the prisoners are again driven into their cells, Rocco and Leonore prepare to go down to the dungeon, Pizarro admonishes Rocco to make haste, and Marzelline and Jaquino participate (for musical reasons) by a demonstration of their feelings in the ensemble, which, after the prisoners have retired, dies away softly to an extreme *pianissimo*—an impressive preparation for the next act.

The instrumental number which opens the second act and suggests the despairful gloom of the dungeon, is one of Beethoven's most marvellous inspirations; the "dread silence," broken only by sighing and trembling, is a vision of genius realized. The true Beethoven (imitated later by Wagner in the "Ring" for characterizing the "Neidhöhle") is shown in the employment of the kettle-drums with the interval of a diminished fifth (A-E $\flat$ ), which lends a weird tinge to the harmonic color. Now, introduced by a recitative, follows immediately the aria of Florestan, "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen," an especial favorite of Beethoven's, who utilized the theme in all three Leonore overtures. This aria, of extreme difficulty both vocally and histrionically, found an ideal interpreter in Albert Niemann; natural and noble, high-souled and patient, his Florestan, even in fetters, was a hero neither to be debased by imprisonment nor to be broken by affliction. In the Allegro, above which soars the "Angel Leonore," an oboe-part freely led

(the oboe serves Beethoven throughout for characterizing this peerless woman), Niemann rose gigantic to visionary heights (according to Beethoven's directions, "in a transport bordering on delirium, yet outwardly calm"); his tempo grew more and more rapid, until at the close, overcome by his ecstasy, he fell swooning before his pallet.

The succeeding melodrama (No. 12), a conversation between Leonore and Rocco, is one of the most affecting scenes of the opera. Here Beethoven's blending of word and tone—which elsewhere in melodrama are often inorganically juxtaposed—is masterly. Precisely the spoken word has, in this case, a singularly naturalistic, sinister effect, while the low-toned commentary of the orchestra bears the scene on its murmurous undercurrent into the sphere of the Ideal. Attention may be called especially to two scenes of rarest dramatic association. The sleeping Florestan makes, in his dream (*poco adagio*) a gesture. Of what is he dreaming? That is told in the orchestra by the figure which, in the foregoing aria, corresponds to "Leonore, die Gattin."

Some measures further on, at Rocco's words "Hier ist die Zisterne, von der ich dir gesagt habe" (namely, that it was destined to be the prisoner's grave), there sounds a motive that corresponds, in the Finale of the first act, to the shuddering of Leonore (shortly after her words "Vielleicht das Grab des Gatten graben, was kann fürchterlicher sein?"); only the instrumentation—in the former instance woodwind, now strings—is changed. The following duet while Rocco and Leonore are digging the grave, acquires its symphonic character from a motive, weirdly borne by the double-bassoon and double-basses, that runs through the entire number.

The orchestral coloring is further heightened by the sustained tones of the brazen-voiced trombones, symbolizing in a sort Rocco's stern duty. He, with his monotonous, prosy declamation, is characterized as the sober, businesslike partner in contrast with the soulful melody of the profoundly agitated Leonore. The latter forms the great-hearted resolution to free the captive, *whoever he may be* (all this time she has not been able to recognize Florestan). Only during the following dialogue does Leonore succeed in catching sight of Florestan's face, and surely recognizing him. Her four brief words, "Grosser Gott! Er ist's!" fraught with suppressed anguish, are to be numbered among the most deeply affecting, as well as the most difficult, problems of stage-expression.

The noble Trio (No. 13), in which Florestan gives thanks for the draught, and Leonore persuades Rocco to concede the prisoner

a piece of bread besides, unfortunately has a *stretta* close taken over from the first version, which is not perfectly adapted to the dramatic situation and the expression of the words. Now the Governor arrives, and the action rises (in the Quartet, No. 14) to the height of extreme tragic tension, whereupon the "catastrophe" follows. Pizarro discovers himself to Florestan, who, conscious of his innocence, confronts him with manly dignity. At the instant when Pizarro threatens to fall upon Florestan, dagger in hand, the supposititious Fidelio rushes at the Governor. First degree of the dynamic intensification—a youth, the turnkey's future son-in-law, apparently moved by a generous impulse, seeks to prevent the murder; for the moment neither Pizarro nor Florestan nor Rocco sees anything more. Only after Pizarro, with the exclamation "Wahnsinniger!", has thrust aside the assumed Fidelio, and makes to attack Florestan for the second time, does Leonore throw herself before the latter with the far-famed cry "Töt erst sein Weib!"



These few words, which Leonore ejaculates during a sudden orchestral pause, are to-day regarded by us as a matter of course, in their apt simplicity. But Beethoven's sketch-books, and his earlier versions of the opera, show that the definitive solution was the result of prolonged experimentation. The very first version was this:



Then Beethoven tried the transition from a mild dissonance on the chord "Weib!"



to the sharp dissonance



which resolves, by an enharmonic change, into B minor. Now

he evidently experimented further, trying other resolutions of the chord, at first into G-sharp minor (really A-flat minor), then again into B minor, and also into D minor. In the first and second working-out we read:



and should note the fact that in 1805 and 1806 the note B appears in all parts at the word "Weib!", whereas in the vocal score published in 1810 a B $\flat$  is written.

The quartet grows more and more agitated; Pizarro decides to kill Leonore too, if necessary. Climax of the dramatic tension. Now Leonore draws a pistol from her blouse and aims it at Pizarro "Noch einen Laut, und du bist tot!" According to Wagner, this "tot" was spoken rather than sung by the Schroeder-Devrient.<sup>1</sup> "This tremendous effect resulted from the singular fright that seized upon me at being suddenly hurled, as it were, by the axe-stroke of the headsman out of the ideal sphere into which the music lifts the most dismayful situations, down on the bare ground of the ghastliest reality. Herein there was given an immediate revelation of the supreme climax of the sublime, which, in my recollection of the sensation, I designate as the moment—swift as a lightning-flash—that illumines two wholly disparate worlds, at the point where they touch and yet are entirely separate, in such wise that for just this moment we can cast a glance into both worlds at once."

Here too Beethoven experimented with the word "tot." In the first sketch he treated it as follows:



Nottebohm was mistaken in regarding this downward step of a second as the "indifferent" treatment of an "important word." This "indifference" is only apparent, for—as the Schroeder-Devrient has proved—this colorless, almost unmusical delivery of the word can have a far more horrifying *dramatic* effect than

<sup>1</sup>The Schroeder-Devrient, according to her own account, happened on this nuance in consequence of a sudden attack of faintness by which she was surprised on the stage. (Cf. von Wolzogen, "Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient," p. 58 *et seq.*)

the more *musically* significant outcry which Beethoven, after trying the downward skip of a third, finally wrote out in the last sketch:



In both the first and second versions of the opera we find the following reading:



But the definitive form reads thus:



This gives Leonore time to draw the pistol during the brief pause. Between the first and second fanfares Beethoven introduced that impressive short movement that has already been mentioned in the discussion of the "Leonore" overtures. After the second fanfare, Jaquino comes down with officers and soldiers; Florestan and Leonore are saved; Pizarro must go to meet the Minister.

A bit of heart-to-heart dialogue, and the ecstatic duet of the reunited pair, "O namenlose Freude," brings the overpowering scene to a wonderful close. What follows is merely an epilogue; the short spoken interlude of Rocco, who returns bearing good tidings, is quite justifiably cut.

The Finale (No. 16), with its mighty mass-jubilation, also contains some passages of more intimate individual charm;—as when the Minister, quite in the spirit of "The Magic Flute" and the Ninth Symphony, sings: "Es sucht der Bruder seine Brüder, und kann er helfen, hilft er gern"; and then that exquisite movement (*Sostenuto assai*) during which Leonore frees her husband from his chains. The textual correspondence with Schiller's lines, "Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, stimm' in unsern Jubel ein," is not accidental; it breathes the same spirit in which "Fidelio" and the last symphony were created.

With what high approval Beethoven regarded his one opera is shown by a remark reported by Schindler to Rochlitz: "This child of his brain had caused him greater anguish in travail than any of the others; therefore he loved it the most, and thought it peculiarly worthy of preservation and utilization for the science of art."

*(Translated by Theodore Baker)*



# PRACTICAL MUSIC AND THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

By ARTHUR L. MANCHESTER

**S**UCH consideration as has been given to music as a part of college curricula has been directed chiefly to its theoretical branches. Harmony, counterpoint, the history of music and, forming the apex of collegiate music study, composition have been given a minor place in college courses with a moiety of credit toward the baccalaureate degree. Practical music, that is to say, performance by means of voice or instrument, has been greatly depreciated or entirely ignored. Yet it is practical music that conforms more closely to true educational ideals. The theoretical study of music supplies a fund of facts about music and, to those who are exceptionally endowed, opens the way for specialization as composers and theorists, but these subjects, as taught in our colleges, do not touch the daily life of the majority of students nor do they prepare the mass of the student body for living. They are practically vocational in trend. On the other hand, practical music, being actual participation of the student in musical re-creation induces activity of those faculties through which the fullest measure of education is secured and preparation for future living is attained. The proper cultivation of practical music develops a quickness of perception, an acuteness of visual and auditory analysis, a rapidity of coördinated action and a keen power of observing and comprehending beauty and symmetry which are educational factors of undeniable value.

The recent remarkable progress of music as a factor in social and cultural life, particularly during the past five years, is too significant to escape notice. Uniting a harmonious activity of mental, spiritual, esthetic and physical attributes music has advanced from the position of a luxurious enjoyment of the few to become the serious pursuit of a multitude. Myriads of people, whose intelligence cannot be denied and for whose interest in it no purely selfish motive can be found, have accepted music as an important adjunct of complete living and testify to its vivifying influence and its power to awaken aspirations cultural, social and religious. Leaders of industrial life have recognized its potentialities and are using it in store and factory as a solvent for discontent and social unrest. These men of business, whose minds view things from the utilitarian

standpoint, have seen in music intensive values that can arouse the worker to experiences hitherto undreamed of. Its rich resources as a form of literature, its power as a mode of human expression and the hold it takes on human nature have impressed those who are working for social uplift with a definite realization of its worth as a means of social development. The significance of this testimony as to the power of music is enhanced by the fact that these witnesses are not professional musicians interested in its development through hope of personal gain but are musically unlearned folk who have been impelled to this belief, in many instances, in spite of early indifference if not decided prejudice. The Great War added to the weight of this testimony. During the vital business of preparing our men for the battle field music was early assigned an important place in their training and, later, at the front.

Nor is this popular manifestation of intense musical activity the only one which should attract attention. It may be said that no subject is so universally taught. In public school, college and university, in hundreds of independent music schools and by hundred thousands of private teachers instruction in music is being given continually. Nor has this instruction failed to strive for improvement of methods. Teachers of music are not content to use methods that even a few years ago were deemed satisfactory. Principles of instruction and interpretation have been subjected to keen analysis and changes of pedagogic emphasis have been so marked in recent years that the musical pedagog of a few decades ago would be bewildered by them. While standards still exhibit too great variation, continuous effort is being made to unify the work of music teaching and the methods in use to-day are far in advance of those of a few years ago. Pedagogic ideals are higher, educational aims are becoming more definite and better articulated.

Despite these manifestations of the vital association of music with the intimate life of the people, this frank acceptance of it by social and industrial leaders and the universality and steadily improved character of its instruction, practical music is denied inclusion in college curricula on a plane with other subjects which do not touch the masses of the people to a fraction of the extent and power of music. Were Latin and Greek to receive a tithe of the popular attention now given to music their prominence in college curricula would increase many fold. Surely herein is a paradox. That a subject of such universal cultivation, whose inspirational power is being unceasingly demonstrated, whose influence upon life is undeniable should be given so little consideration in the preparing of higher educational curricula by those whose minds should be

quick to sense just such values as music is displaying, is surprising. The small measure of recognition given to theoretical music but serves to draw attention to the paradox. If, as Herbert Spencer has said, "the essential question for us is to live completely, and to prepare us for complete living is the function of education," certainly a subject which has so definitely and broadly proved its worth as an element of the complete life as has practical music, should not be treated so indifferently in the making of educational curricula in our colleges. The situation is anomalous and the question naturally arises as to why it exists. Have educators, through indifference or prejudice, failed to perceive the educational qualities which practical music undoubtedly possesses, or is there a possibility that musicians, themselves, are more or less largely responsible for the anomalous position in which practical music finds itself? The modifications that have been made in college courses of study to meet changes of opinion concerning the purpose of college training, indicate the willingness of those who dictate these courses to include subjects which affect the future of students. The decrease of classical requirements with a corresponding increase in scientific and vocational courses and the admission of courses in the fine arts are indicative of the attitude of college authorities. In view of these facts an inquiry into the character of music study as it is generally pursued in college music departments may clear up the situation.

The practice of music, rapidly developing into well defined specialties, each possessing its own peculiar technique and requirements of instruction, attracted a constantly increasing body of students whose entire attention became more and more absorbed by the form in which they were especially interested. This absorption in some particular manifestation of music produced sharply drawn lines of separation and caused formulators of methods of musical instruction to lose sight of two truths which underlie music education equally with other forms, and which must be taken into account by those who would place music where it rightfully belongs in the scheme of public education. First, that to be educationally valuable music must speak a message to the people at large, who must be prepared to understand and appreciate its utterances; and, second, that while there are various forms of musical manifestation they are all branches of the parent trunk, their fruitfulness depending upon the proper cultivation of the stem from which they derive their life; and whether music be viewed from the standpoint of the creator, theorist, performer or pedagogue; whether it be taught in the public school, the college, the university, the conservatory or by private teacher, underlying all instruction are basic educational principles

requiring recognition and logical development; and however divergent the activities of the different exponents of music eventually may become there is a point where their specialization emerges from the parent art.

The failure of musicians to apprehend these truths has constituted the weakness of their educational activities for the past fifty years and still remains a hindrance to the acceptance of music as a factor in higher education. It is the excessive emphasis placed on the vocational aspect of music study, exalting it unduly, which relegates to the background, and obscures, that view which sees in music a close connection with social and national life and opens up a vast field of cultural education in which the people can participate *en masse*. This restriction of the office of music has come to pass despite the fact that history is replete with illustrations of the intimacy existing between it and personal, social and national life in the expression of the deeper feelings of human nature. And this restriction persists even now in spite of the remarkable manifestations of recent times. Dominated by this narrow view, the aim of music teaching has been, and still too generally continues to be, the making of players and singers or the development of composers, and back of the activities of those who determine methods of instruction there yet remains the conviction that peculiar and pronounced talent must settle the advisability of music instruction, those only who are so fortunate as to possess this God-given ability being worthy of serious attention, while for the less fortunate majority, which includes the great body of the people, music must continue to be a sealed book.

This narrowness of outlook and the absence of definite standards of instruction naturally have made themselves felt in music teaching. Specialized forms of study have been thrust upon students almost with the first lesson. Technique has become the *sine qua non* of all effort. The necessity for breadth of culture has been ignored. That courses of study having for their purpose the education of intelligent hearers of music could be formulated and successfully carried out, has scarcely been dreamed of. Music departments of colleges, imitating independent schools of music, have become technical training schools, vocational centers, building specialization on a foundation of sand and giving little, or no, thought to the possibility that a nation of appreciative music lovers in whose lives music is a potent force gradually can be developed through their agency, if they will but open their minds to a comprehension of the true mission of music in the world and the vital part they should play in the establishment of that mission. The result of this lack of vision

upon the part of musicians is seen in the almost complete separation of music from general educational thought. Educators were quick to perceive the false basis on which the temple of music education was founded. The undue emphasis placed by exponents of music upon the personal equation, the constantly iterated statement that temperament and exceptional natural endowment are indispensable in music education, automatically shut the doors of the academic educational world on music.

Quite different is the purpose of those who shape the baccalaureate courses in these same colleges. The underlying principle which has exerted influence here is that in preparing the college student for complete living he should be grounded as thoroughly as possible in certain subjects which in later years will touch his life continually. These subjects are historical, political, economic, scientific, literary and religious in character. The extent to which each shall be pursued is determined by an estimate of its disciplinary importance and its bearing on the future of the student. The courses in these subjects are not planned to exploit the gifts of the enthusiastic embryo author, scientist, political economist or divine. They are so shaped that all students, the crude and intellectually dull as well as the gifted and brilliant, shall derive benefit from them. These subjects are selected because of a belief in their general utility and their power to develop the faculties of the student along lines of future receptivity and initiative. A foundation of perceptive powers, controlled mental activity and breadth of view prepared, the future author, scientist, political economist and theologian may proceed to specialized forms of study according as his predilections may be revealed. Not so is the scheme of present-day music education as followed in the college music department generally. Specialization begins immediately. Some degree of broader cultural training may be attempted if the director of the department happen to be a person of larger educational vision, but the paralyzing doctrine of temperament and special endowment dominates the shaping of music courses as a whole. A narrower kind of education is substituted for a broader and in the general welter of competition to graduate a large number of players and singers, the needs of the masses of the people are forgotten. Under the domination of its present ideals the college music department is failing to take advantage of the opportunity offered it by close contact with thousands of students who spend a considerable length of time within the college environment and then go out to touch the thousands in their various communities. The humanistic service that music can so well render is overlooked and the merry farce of attempting to turn out virtuosi who are never

heard of in later years continues to the lasting injury of music as an educational force and to the denial of music's wonderful resources as an element of the complete life to those who need it and would derive great good from it.

That practical music may claim the right to inclusion in the academic educational scheme on a plane of equality with other subjects of the baccalaureate curriculum is apparent if the noteworthy manifestations of its power to engage the attention and influence the lives of the people be considered. With such testimony in evidence, it seems unnecessary to argue that a force which is emphatically demonstrating its social utility and its mental and spiritual efficacy can be made a useful agency in our system of education. If, however, our analysis of current methods of college instruction in practical music be correct, it is necessary to show that these educational possibilities can be made to conform to college standards. The responsibility for this demonstration rests upon musicians. It is they who must subject the educational formulae of practical music to a scrutiny that will lay bare misdirection of aim and wrong methods of instruction. Aims and methods which reveal inadequacy must be discarded even though it work a revolution in the program of college music courses. There must be a distinct cleavage between courses which have for their purpose specialization in professional training and those intended to result in the real musical education of the greatest possible number of the college student body. Courses must deal with those phases of music which make the strongest humanistic appeal. They must touch intimately the thousands of college students who, having no pronounced aptitude for intensive technical development, either as executants or composers, nevertheless do possess the intellectual and emotional capacity needed for an appreciation of music and are capable of mastering its instrumental and vocal technique sufficiently to enable them to express themselves musically. The outstanding purpose of these courses should be the inspiration of college students to become lovers of good music and enthusiastic propagandists of a nation-wide musical knowledge and appreciation.

Music offers a wealth of material from which to formulate such courses, material which can be made to conform to academic standards. In utility, in its bearing on the future life of the student, in the training of mind and body to harmonious and thoroughly co-ordinated action and in the development of initiative, this material can be made to equal any subject now admitted to the college curriculum. Its subject matter can be presented in conformity to college methods. Tested by college standards, courses which properly

present it will measure up to college requirements. In certain institutions where practical music has been included in the baccalaureate course and fairly tested, the similarity of methods and the nature of the work to those in English and science has been marked. As in English and the sciences the material used in courses in practical music is adapted to, and requires, a combination of class room and laboratory work. The fundamentals of the science and art of music and facts about its scientific and artistic development supply the material for work in the class room. The practical application of these fundamentals and accessory facts, as made with instrument or voice, constitute laboratory experimentation and demonstration. This attitude toward practical music, which makes performance an expression of knowledge previously gained in the class room, relegates technical training to its proper place. Technique becomes a vehicle for the expression of the music one has learned to know and feel, a means to an end and not the end itself. Virtuosity, professionalism, the vocational aspect of music study are no longer the goal on which attention is focussed. The aim is so to know music as to derive the largest measure of intellectual and spiritual benefit and enjoyment from it and to be able to express one's knowledge satisfactorily.

The subjects from which the material relating to the fundamentals of music as a science and an art should be assembled in courses based on this view of music education are harmony, with such treatment of counterpoint and composition as will give the student an insight into their processes, the architecture of music as displayed in its formal structure and the physical, or acoustical, basis of music. Subjects dealing with facts about music, a knowledge of which is essential to supplement that of fundamentals and aid in their practical application and musical expression, should include the evolution of notation, the orchestra, its instruments and music, the history of music and a study of the personalities of those who have created it and influenced its development. In these subjects will be found all that is needed for an education in music that will parallel a knowledge of the literature on which English courses are based. The study of them can be made as comprehensive and thorough as conditions demand. Harmony, the grammar and rhetoric of music discovers to the student the harmonic and melodic basis of the art. He will eventually recognize it as the source from which is derived the subtle intellectual and emotional stimulus so strongly felt by those who know music and listen to it understandingly. From his study of the physical basis of music he learns the part nature has taken in determining the chord and scale

relationships of which harmony treats. Structural symmetry, the balance of unity and variety of melodic and harmonic sequence and of tonality are revealed during his investigation of the laws of musical form. Here we have a trilogy of subjects relating to science and art which initiates the student into the mysteries of music and so clarifies his understanding of the vital elements of music that he is able to express his own musical feeling and listen to the performance of others with an intelligence and a sympathetic appreciation of deeper meanings that elude the uneducated participant or hearer.

Supplementing the knowledge acquired from these fundamental subjects is that derived from correlated courses dealing with facts about music. The symbols by means of which the thoughts of great composers have been preserved, making possible their re-creation centuries after their creators first gave them to the world, passed through centuries of evolution before reaching their present degree of perfection. The study of notation tells this story of this development and throws interesting sidelights on the mentality, the mental processes, of those who contributed to this development and of the difficulties which attended the growth of music as an art. Allied to notation and running parallel with the story notation tells, is the history of music and the study of personalities connected with musical development. Here the student becomes aware of the connection of music with the political, social, literary and religious conditions of the time. Third in this group is the most comprehensive and potential of the instruments of musical expression—the orchestra. The wonderful range of artistic and descriptive expression and the iridescent richness of tone color possible in orchestral performances stimulate imagination and awaken undreamed of experiences. The study of the characteristics of orchestral instruments is an important part of the education of the music lover.

A literature of unexcelled richness has accumulated during the centuries since music attained its early perfection of technique and form. Epic, dramatic, pastoral, humorous and narrative compositions for instruments and voice, solo and in many combinations of ensemble, offer material of great variety and interest by means of which familiarity with a wide range of musical thought can be attained. What subject of the college curriculum has more to offer?

Safeguards for the maintenance of standards can be thrown about college courses in practical music as easily and effectively as in the case of any other subject. Examinations of the work done in the class room can be made as definite and searching and tests of proficiency and thoroughness of work done at the instrument are as easily provided. Standards of attainment in performance can be



determined with definiteness. Semester hours can be calculated with accuracy and it will be found that the student of practical music who obtains credit in music toward the baccalaureate degree has actually done more hours of work than the academic student who does not include music in his course.

Here is an art conspicuously exerting an undeniable and continuous influence for physical, social, mental and spiritual uplift on individual and community life. It combines scientific and esthetic qualities and in wealth of suitable material, in its adaptation to educational purposes and appeal it ranks with any subject in the college curriculum touching with even greater powers the future life of the college student than many of those now accepted. If it be the duty of the musician to develop the educational possibilities of practical music, demonstrating them beyond question, a responsibility equally important rests upon those college authorities in whose hands is the determination of the baccalaureate curriculum. If they are sincerely desirous of making college training a complete preparation for future living, and we have no reason to think otherwise, they will not treat lightly, or ignore, the manifestations of practical music and will give its claims to a place in the college curriculum as a factor in complete education just consideration and ample opportunities for a full and fair test.

# THE CUCKOO AND NIGHTINGALE IN MUSIC

By ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD

**T**O musician, philosopher and poet alike, the subject of Bird Music has always been one of more than ordinary attraction. The musician has been interested in its artistic expression; the philosopher in its scientific investigation; the poet in its emotional appeal. Thus, more than fifty years "before the Common Account called Anno Domini," we have the Latin poet and philosopher, Lucretius, attributing the origin of music to human imitation of the harmony of the feathered tribe. By his English translator, Creech (1714), he is represented as asserting concerning primitive humanity that

Through all the woods they heard the charming noise  
Of chirping birds, and tried to frame their voice  
And imitate. Thus birds instructed man,  
And taught them songs before their art began.

Some eighteen centuries later the same idea was echoed by that great musical historian, Sir John Hawkins, who, in the first volume of his *History of Music*, opines that

The voices of animals, the whistling of the winds, the fall of water, the concussion of bodies of various kinds, not to mention the melody of birds, as they all contain in them the rudiments of harmony, may easily be supposed to have furnished the minds of intelligent creatures with such ideas of sound, as time, and the accumulated observation of succeeding ages, could not fail to improve into a system.

For an English lawyer, accustomed by training and environment to "admit nothing," to "question everything," and to "call for proof," this is a fairly complete committment, if one may be allowed to use the word in a literary rather than in a legal sense. But whether the theories of poet and philosopher and of musical amateur are consonant with fact, is not so much a matter for concern in the present connection. To us the significant thing is that thoughtful men, living in widely remote periods, and engaged in totally different pursuits, should share similar views with reference to the importance of the music of "the fowls of the air."

From birds in general two or three particular classes of songsters have been especially selected for notice by practical musicians as

well as by writers on musical topics. These classes comprise the birds known as the cuckoo, the nightingale, and the lark. Of the latter it is not convenient to speak in this essay; but it is only fair to say that while the first class has obtained notoriety on account of the characteristic interval of its vocal figure, the two latter classes have achieved undying fame through the variety and beauty of their songs. Concerning the cuckoo as a bird, all that can be said here is that the singing cuckoo is a habitant of the Eastern hemisphere, visiting Europe,—in early spring,—from the wooded parts of Northern Africa, and departing before the end of summer. Thus the old English saying:

In May he sings both night and day,  
In June he altereth his tune,  
In July he'll fly away.

The cuckoo's objectionable habit of depositing its eggs in the nest of another bird,—generally that of the hedge-sparrow,—and the still more objectionable habit of the young cuckoo of throwing out of the nest every occupant except himself, are facts known to every tyro in natural history. The cuckoo of the Eastern world is mostly of a bluish ash colour, and only the males sing. The American yellow-billed cuckoo, although possessing the redeeming feature of rearing its own young, is songless and, therefore, has no musical interest.

This latter, of course, centres entirely in the cuckoo's song—if such it may be called. This "song" has several remarkable characteristics, one of which is interesting on scientific grounds, the other for aesthetic or purely musical reasons. The former peculiarity has never received the attention it deserves. Probably the first to direct attention to it was that poet of nature, William Wordsworth, who, in his poem "To the Cuckoo," says:

When I am lying on the grass  
Thy two-fold shout I hear,  
That seems to fill the whole air's space  
As loud far off as near.

For a man who has never been credited with any definite musical knowledge, these lines exhibit considerable acumen, since the poet has not only drawn attention to the well-known fact that the cuckoo's song consists of two tones, but has earned our gratitude by reminding us that this "two-fold shout" seems "as loud far off as near." Indeed the cuckoo's song is distinctly audible at distances much greater than a mile and, under favourable circumstances, has been often so heard by the present writer. We can understand the

extensive audibility of the song of the nightingale or the lark, on account of their remarkable timbre; but the tones of the cuckoo have no particularly musical quality to assist them in this respect. The whole subject would be, in our opinion, an interesting one for further acoustical investigation and for much fuller discussion.

Of the more musical characteristics of the cuckoo's tones, Wordsworth, as we have already noticed, in his expression "two-fold shout," has left us to infer that the cuckoo's call consists of only two tones. These tones are generally of uniform length, or with the first tone slightly shorter than the second, while both are somewhat *staccato*, each "call" being followed by a slight period of silence. But the most interesting point is the interval separating the two tones. This, in contradiction to popular ideas which here, as well as almost everywhere else, are nearly always incorrect, is usually a perfect 4th at the first appearance of the bird in England and adjacent countries. The writer has never heard this interval exceeded except on one occasion. This was on May 30, 1912, when walking on Stanner Ridge, near Kington, Herefordshire, England, on the borderland between England and Central Wales. Here he noted a cuckoo distinctly and repeatedly singing an augmented 4th. But as the season advances the compass of the interval decreases, first to a major 3rd, and then to that interval by which the cuckoo's call is conventionally represented,—a minor 3rd. Eventually the cuckoo's voice breaks, the "two-fold shout" disappears, and gives place to a mere unmusical croak of approximately a semitone.

The absolute pitch of the lower of the two tones forming the cuckoo's call is near to, or about, middle C or D.<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hawkins writes it thus, using the Soprano Clef:



Here the conventional interval of a minor 3rd, the period of silence after each call, and the old English orthography, are all points of interest.

<sup>1</sup>In a recent publication of some extracts from her father's note-books, a daughter of the late Sir Hubert Parry devotes a page to his records of cuckoo calls, as heard at his Gloucestershire residence one summer during the latter part of May and the earlier days of June. These calls, nearly 40 in number, have either middle C, D, D flat, or E flat for their final sounds, and range in compass from a major 2nd to a major 3rd, the first note of each call being almost invariably shorter than the second. Sir Hubert has also added some interesting remarks on the intonation and the manner of execution of the various calls. In one place he speaks of "two cuckoos singing the same call with very different timbre, one like a stopped diapason, and the other like a gamba.

About half a century after the appearance of Hawkins' history, —in 1832, to be exact,—William Gardiner, a stocking manufacturer of Leicester, England, a noted musical amateur, litterateur, composer, and compiler, and a personal acquaintance and correspondent of Haydn and Beethoven, produced his "Music of Nature; or an attempt to prove that what is passionate and pleasing in the art of singing, speaking, and performing upon musical instruments, is derived from the sounds of the Animated World." In this quaint, interesting, and anything but worthless work, Gardiner says, concerning the cuckoo, that children mark his well-known song, crying



Here we have, as our selected pitch, the G clef instead of the Soprano, the interval of a major rather than that of a minor 3rd, and a more modern notation. Also the silence after each call is graphically represented, as well as the lengthening of the second tone and the accentuation of the first, both these latter points being occasional features of the cuckoo's song. This song, says Gardiner, "I have invariably found in Leicestershire to be in the key of D. If the cuckoos in other countries should be found to accord with this curious fact, as nature is pretty much the same, we may take these notes as a standard of pitch." With our absolutely accurate and scientifically constructed instruments for the denoting of absolute pitch, the idea of being dependent for the latter upon such a variable thing as the tone of a cuckoo is now as preposterous as it is absurd. Gardiner then goes on to quote the celebrated naturalist, Gilbert White (1720–1793), of Selborne, Hampshire, as saying that he had tested all the owls in his neighbourhood with a pitch pipe, and found them to hoot in B flat, and the cuckoos to sing in the key of D!<sup>1</sup>

Whatever one may think concerning Sir John Hawkins' opinion that the reproduction of these tones constitutes "the most ancient species of musical notation," and that the tones themselves "appear to be a natural and very obvious subject for it," it is a mere matter of fact that these "reproductions," in number at least, have been legion. Perhaps the earliest example of them is to be found in the old English Rota, or Round, attributed to John of Fornsete, a monk of Reading, about 1226. Here we have the phrase:



<sup>1</sup>The standard pitch at the end of the 18th Century was nearly a tone lower than at present. This would lower the pitch of White and Gardiner to (approximately) C.

woven in as an integral and essential part of the composition. Then in the Elizabethan age, John Bennet (who flourished between 1570 and 1615, but of whose life little is known save that he was one of the contributors to the *Triumphs of Oriana*), published in 1599, "Madrigals to four voyces being his first works." In one of these, "Thyrsis, sleepest thou?" he has a vocal imitation of the cuckoo's song; while Thomas Weelkes, another contributor to the *Triumphs of Oriana*, and sometime organist of Chichester Cathedral, a great writer of English church music and madrigals, published in 1600, two books of madrigals in which one composition, "The Nightingale the Organ of Delight," again introduces the cuckoo's song vocally.

Leaving England for Italy, and vocal for instrumental music, our next example is found to be the "Capriccio sopra il Cucho" of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1644), the most distinguished organist of his age, sometime organist of St. Peter's, Rome. This work was one of a collection of Capricci published in Rome in 1624, and at Venice in 1626. The opening measures run thus:



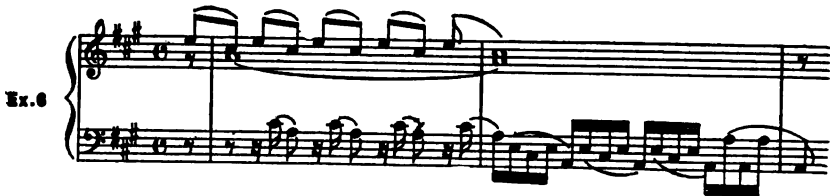
Here we have the more popular interval of a minor 3rd used as the initial tones of a "point of imitation" and (as a reference to the whole composition would show) continuously in the melody, which latter consists of nothing but the two sounds, D and B, repeated after divers rests during which the imitative treatment continues in the other parts. This work has been transcribed for the piano-forte by Harold Bauer, and for the modern organ by John E. West.

About half a century later comes Johann Kasper Kerl, the noted organist of Munich and Vienna, probably a pupil of Frescobaldi, but certainly a student under Carissimi. On the 17th of July, 1679, he wrote a "Capriccio Kuku," in G, which has been edited by the late Mr. J. S. Shedlock. Here the style is less vocal and better suited to keyboard execution than that of Frescobaldi. We quote the opening measures from which it will be seen that the minor 3rd is again employed, a proceeding which obtains throughout the movement:



It was upon a motet of Kerl's that Handel was supposed to have founded the chorus, "Egypt was glad when they departed," from his *Israel in Egypt*; and, as we shall see later, he appears to have known and to have been under considerable obligations to the Cuckoo Capriccio.

Returning again to Italy we find Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710), the celebrated Roman organist and harpsichordist, writing in 1698 his "Toccata con lo Scherzo del Cuccó." Here the style and general expression shew a still further advance. The key chosen is A, but the cuckoo call occasionally expresses itself in a major 3rd, the rhythm being an alternation of two equal notes or a shorter followed by a longer. Both these points are illustrated in the closing measures:



Passing—geographically—to France, and—chronologically—to the 18th century, we meet with Louis Claude Daquin, the Parisian organist, who, in 1735, published his first book of harpsichord pieces, a volume in which was found his celebrated "Le Coucou," "so quaintly fresh that it will surely never grow old." And so popular did the cuckoo call become that not only was it made the germ or motive for isolated harpsichord movements, but upon it were actually founded so-called Cuckoo Concertos. Amongst these was one by Antonio Vivaldi, the Italian violinist, the work being contained in his series of concertos attempting to illustrate the four seasons. Then there was also the cuckoo concerto of the Saxon-born English resident, John Frederick Lampe (1703–51), the friend of Handel and also of Charles Wesley, the hymnodist. Lampe was a brother-in-law of Thomas Arne, and this reminds us that in 1770, the great English melodist, whose memory is perpetuated in the immortal strains of "Rule Britannia" and "Where the Bee sucks," produced in London, under the direction of Garrick,

a representation of Dryden's *King Arthur*, with Purcell's original music supplemented by some additional numbers from Arne's pen. Amongst the latter was a new overture which is stated to have contained amongst other features, "an imitation on the flute of the call of the 'Cuckow.'" Both Arne and Lampe represented the cuckoo's call by the interval of a major 3rd. But nearly a century earlier Purcell himself had employed the same device, and at the same interval, in the concluding symphony of a song in the *Faerie Queen*, a series of pieces of incidental music written, in 1692, to illustrate an anonymous adaptation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But that greater Saxon than Lampe,—the giant Saxon,—George Frederick Handel, with all his mastery over the somewhat restricted methods of musical expression characteristic of his age, only includes the cuckoo call in one of his compositions for his favourite instrument, the organ. This particular work was that known as the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto, a composition or compilation planned for the orchestra and the English organ of Handel's day,—an orchestra of string, oboes, and bassoons, and an organ of limited compass and destitute of a pedal board. The interest of the Concerto is centered in its first movement in which occurs the characteristic passage from which its name is derived. The great organ virtuoso, the late Mr. W. T. Best, of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, perhaps the greatest performer upon his instrument that the world has ever seen,—certainly the greatest of the 19th century,—has included a concerto under this name in a set of movements, selected from Handel, arranged for the organ in concerto form, and published as examples of the latter by Boosey & Co., of London. But Best's introduction differs from that preceding the detached concerto known as the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto, because taken from various other sources. The same applies to the two movements which follow the Allegro; and even the latter—which is the only movement possessing any interest for us in this connection—is taken in part from the 9th Grand Concerto for Strings. Further, Best's work although masterly in construction and effect, is, really, a very free transcription, the finely developed Cadenza being entirely the work of "W.T.B." In this Best version the cuckoo call introduces the second subject, *e.g.*,





and is used throughout the latter, sometimes in conjunction with the nightingale motive, *e.g.*,

Ex. 8

(Nightingale)  
Sw. *pp*

Ch. Cl. *p*  
(Cuckoo)

The manner in which this call is expressed is, however, more *à la* Best than Handelian in style. Nevertheless, a comparison of Exs. 4 and 7 would seem to show, as we have already remarked, that Handel in the cultivation of this Concerto must have been ploughing with the oxen of Johann Kasper Kerl.

Amongst the classical writers the cuckoo call was relegated for the most part to the realm of children's music. Thus Haydn employs the toy cuckoo in his celebrated Toy Symphony of 1788, writing for it—on the tones G and E—artistically and effectively. In these latter respects he differs from Andreas Romberg (1767–1821), the violinist, who with his cousin, Bernhard Romberg, the violoncellist, and with Anton Reicha, the theorist, played with Beethoven, at Bonn, in the band of the Elector of Cologne. Romberg writes at the same pitch as Haydn, but frequently employs rapid repetitions of the tones instead of the two call-sounds. As both Mendelssohn's Toy Symphonies, composed in 1827, are lost, we are only able to surmise that as the instruments were known to be identical with those used by Haydn, the effects produced, and the notation employed, were probably more or less similar to those of the older master.

As may reasonably be expected, Beethoven introduces the cuckoo call into his Pastoral Symphony. Here, in the Coda to

Ex. 8

Nachtigall

Flauto Solo  
*p cresc.*

Oboe Solo

Clarineti in Bb

Wachtel

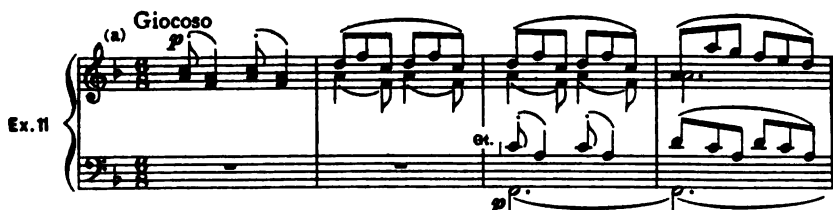


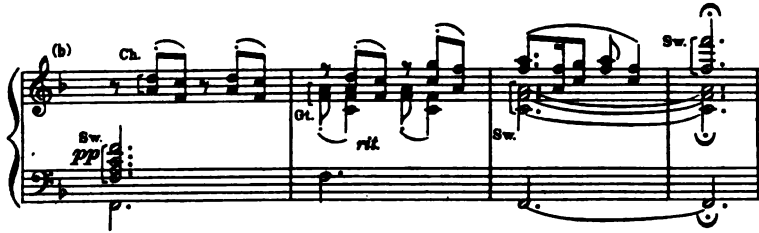
the slow movement,—the scene by the brook,—we have the tones forming a major 3rd assigned to the clarinets in unison,—the part being marked “Kukuk,”—in company with the flute,—marked “Nachtigall,”—and the oboe,—marked “Wachtel” (quail). Some enthusiasts have tried to read a cuckoo call into the broken tonic chords which usher in the second subject of the Pastoral Sonata, Op. 28 and the upper part of the harmony over the dominant pedal preceding the Coda (Ex. 10). But this is too much like



bringing the head of Charles the First into everything, especially as the name Pastoral was not given to the Sonata in D by Beethoven himself but, in all probability, by the publisher, Cranz, of Hamburg.

And although the romantic school has treated the cuckoo call with scant courtesy, the progression still survives in some modern music. Thus Reinecke has included it as a very essential part of his Toy Symphony in C; while a much more important treatment is to be found in Edwin H. Lemare's organ solo, “Cuckoo,” No. 1 of his five Summer Sketches, Op. 73. Perhaps this work of a modern English organ virtuoso is the most artistic we have yet noticed. We give a few measures from the initial and concluding phrases by way of quotation:





but the music will certainly repay very careful study not only in this connection but on account of its own merits. Also the employment of the minor 3rd should not pass unnoticed. There is, we think, an undoubted resemblance or reference to the cuckoo call in Farjeon's Spring Song Op. 23, No. 4 (Ex. 12). Our quotation is from the organ arrangement by Mr. Purcell J. Mansfield, of Paisley Abbey, Scotland, the son of the present writer; but as the first tone is longer than the second, and as the quality of the interval varies, we leave our readers to decide for themselves whether the passage is an intentional imitation or an "undesigned coincidence."



There are doubtless many other examples of the cuckoo's call still to be found in music both ancient and modern,<sup>1</sup> but our space is exhausted and we can only notice here that a device for producing the tones of the cuckoo was often attached to mediaeval organs. Indeed, as late as 1750, an organ in the monastery at Weingarten, built by Gabler, and containing the mystical number of 6666 pipes, was said to have been furnished with one of these accessories. All we can say in favour of such a device is that it was at any rate more sensible than some of those extremely and childishly stupid effects operated by stop knobs in some earlier organs. These consisted of such things as a representation of Time indicating the rhythm by "beating time"; while in one case a certain stop, if drawn, would cause a contrivance something like a fox's tail to flap into the unfortunate performer's face. Such effects were on a par with the rest of the horseplay

<sup>1</sup>For instance Leopold Godowsky's piece "The Cuckoo" in his set of 30 pieces called "Triakontameron" (G. Schirmer, 1920).—Ed.

humour of the Dark Ages, which was generally weak when it was not actually wicked.

Any attempt to write about the nightingale in music degenerates into a mere task of selection rather than research, the material being so enormous and, as a rule, so easily accessible. The bird itself, as everybody is probably aware, is another habitant of the Eastern Hemisphere, arriving in England about the middle of April, and leaving in August or September for southern climes. It is found during the summer in France, Germany, and Poland, and is not unknown in Italy or even in Palestine. One remarkable fact concerning this songster is its preference for certain strictly defined localities. Thus, in the West of England, a noted district for singing birds, the nightingale is extremely partial to the native district of the writer of this paper,—the district included in the western portion of the county of Wiltshire and the eastern portion of the county of Somerset,—the country once occupied by Selwood Forest, and at one time the scene of King Alfred's most brilliant exploits. But in the adjoining and more south-westerly counties of Devon and Cornwall the bird is seldom seen or heard. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon *night* and *galan*, to sing. Its appearance is decidedly plain, and its habits so unobtrusive as to render observation somewhat difficult. Only the males sing. These arrive in England some seven or eight days before the females, singing before and after midnight in order to attract their companions and guide them on their way. The song ceases when the young are hatched. Bechstein states that the muscles of the larynx, in the case of the male bird, are proportionately more powerful than those of any other songster. The melody of the nightingale's song changes according to its emotions. More than a score of variations of its song have been recorded, the latter being so articulate as to render the task of a musical representation comparatively easy. Mr. Danes Barrington, a noted English investigator, has made "an attempt to appraise the songs of English birds and let the world know how they stand from the standpoint of technic, quality, &c." On a basis of 100, Mr. Barrington finds the nightingale an easy first, his analysis being—assigning 20 points to each heading—thus: mellowness of tone, 19; sprightly tones, 14; plaintive tones, 19; compass, 19; and execution, 19; total, 90%. The only birds in the running with the nightingale are, according to our authority, the skylark, with 63%; the linnet with 76%; the woodlark with 59%; and the English robin with 58%.

Like the making of books, references to the song of the nightingale, both in poetry and in prose, are practically without end in

their making. But we are only interested here in those utterances which testify to the musical character of the nightingale's song, and of these reference can only be made to a very few characteristic specimens. For instance, the mournful character of nightingale music is much emphasized by the older writers. Thus Sir Philip Sydney, in "O Philomela fair," says,

The nightingale . . .  
Sings out her woes . . .  
And mournfully bewailing,  
Her throat in tunes expresseth  
What grief her breast oppresseth.

Milton, in his *Il Penseroso*, speaks of the bird as "most musical, most melancholy!" a statement which, two centuries later, Coleridge indignantly repudiated, declaring in his poem, "The Nightingale," that

*In nature there is nothing melancholy.*

Thomson in his *Seasons* insists on the sadder element of the song; and, alluding to the bird, as do all the poets, in the feminine gender, instead of the masculine, asserts that

. . . she sings  
Her sorrows through the night! . . .  
. . . till, wide around, the woods  
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

Milton, however, in his sonnet, "To the Nightingale," takes a more optimistic view of the effect of this song, and apostrophizes the bird thus:

O nightingale, that on yon blooming spray  
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still;  
Thou with fresh hope the lover's breast doth fill.

Last of all we have Matthew Arnold, the apostle of "light and sweetness," crediting the song with at least one new element, in the lines:

Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!  
What triumph! hark!—what pain!

From this we can see that while the poets agree as to the beauty of the nightingale's song, they differ considerably as to its character. In felicitous prose the charm of nightingale music is quaintly but beautifully emphasized by old Isaac Walton, who writes:

He that at midnight . . . shall hear, as I have heard, the sweet descant, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above the earth, and say, Lord! what

music hast Thou provided for Thy saints in Heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?

The numerous variations in the nightingale's song—to which reference has already been made—produce as many differences in its notation as poets and philosophers have discovered in its character. These notational differences are often due to the fact that the bird has different songs in different localities, so that one auditor would hear one strain in one place and, from another bird, another strain elsewhere. Thomas Gardiner, in his "Music of Nature," already referred to, says: "These varieties may be compared to the dialects of different provinces." Gardiner then goes on to attempt to account for the "soft and plaintive note" of the bird, and its "beautiful and solemn melody," by the fact that it "sings in a lower voice than other birds." This statement, speaking comparatively, is fairly correct, the song of many birds being so high as to render absolutely exact musical translation a somewhat difficult task. Gardiner writes the nightingale's song thus:



and declares that Handel has closely imitated it in his *L'Allegro*, e.g.:



But Gardiner's notation, although doubtless proportionately accurate, is not absolutely correct, being much lower than the notation which would be needed to represent the song as often heard by the writer during the summer months near his birthplace in the heart of what was once Selwood Forest. The pitch and melody in this case were almost in exact accordance with the notation assigned to the bird by Beethoven in his Pastoral Symphony, as quoted in Ex. 9, viz.: a prepared shake on the upper tones, generally treble G or upper C. Often we have heard these birds attain to and constantly repeat a perfect *messa di voce* (— —) on upper G of the treble staff, and pipe repetitions on C and D above that as shewn in Exs. 14, 15, and 18.

But more than a century and a half before the appearance of Gardiner's "Music of Nature," there flourished one Athanasius

Kircher, a Jesuit who, fleeing to France when Gustavus Adolphus entered Germany in 1635, became a professor at the Jesuit's College at Avignon, and afterwards professor of mathematics and Hebrew in Rome where he died in 1680. Thirty years before his death he issued his chief work "*Musurgia Universalis*," in the first book of which, according to Sir John Hawkins, "he is very curious in his disquisitions touching the voice and the song of the nightingale which he has endeavoured to render in notes borrowed from the musical scale." Concerning these notes, Hawkins opines that they were more correct rhythmically than tonally, thus confirming our previous statement concerning the numerous varieties of the nightingale's song, and the consequent impossibility of securing notational representation thereof which should be identical as regards melodic outline.

As early as the Elizabethan age the song of the nightingale had commenced to secure the attention of composers, as we have already observed in the case of Thomas Weelkes. But the song of the nightingale being more varied than that of the cuckoo, the former did not lend itself so easily to musical reproduction, especially to such reproduction or representation as would be immediately recognized by an auditor. Indeed, it was not until Handel, in his *L'Allegro*, in 1740, introduced one example or specimen of the nightingale's song, that we have a definite musical passage for quotation. As noted by the great master, the song runs as above. Here the employment of the broken perfect 4th should be carefully noted, as this is Handel's favourite figure for representing the song of the nightingale. He makes extensive use of this motive here and elsewhere, and here so much so that the whole song, "Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly," from which our quotation is taken, will repay careful study in this respect. Eight years later, in 1748, Handel introduced the same feature in his oratorio, *Solomon*, in the celebrated chorus, "May no rash intruder," a chorus, from this circumstance, called the Nightingale Chorus. This time, in addition to the broken 4ths, considerable use is made of the reiterated upper D, these repeated tones, as we have already observed, being a characteristic feature in the song of the nightingale. We quote just a few measures of symphony:



Of course no nightingale ever sings, or ever did sing, precisely as represented in this typical Handelian strain; but the point we wish

to emphasize is that this phrase embodies two of the essential features of the song now under discussion. Hence the reason for its quotation. Further examples shew that Handel must have been a closer student of the music of nature than has ever been admitted or imagined. And this conclusion is confirmed upon reference to the quotation from the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto contained in Ex. 8. Here the broken 3rds and 4ths and the reiterated tones are especially prominent.

Again returning to the classics we note that in the soprano solo, "On mighty pens," from his oratorio, *The Creation*, Haydn, at the words, "From every bush and grove resound the nightingale's delightful notes," suggests the song of the bird by means of a series of springing figures and inverted turns assigned to the solo flute, *e.g.*



Here the effect intended and essayed is not one of actual imitation, but of purely musical suggestion. There are other and perhaps better methods of conveying a musical impression or sensation besides the employment of mere literalism. Here, as elsewhere, whether the letter "killeth" or otherwise, it is the spirit that "giveth life."

Concerning Beethoven's treatment of the nightingale's song in the Pastoral Symphony, as quoted in Ex. 9, it may interest our readers to know that this notation corresponds almost exactly with the song as heard by the writer almost every early summer night for many years in the old English home of his boyhood. Especially should be noticed the prepared shake which is exquisitely performed by some of the birds on brilliant moonlight nights. Another fairly exact representation of the song is to be found in a Beethoven fragment, "Der Gesang der Nachtigall," composed in 1813, and numbered 277 in Series 25 of the Breitkopf and Haertel edition of Beethoven's works. Here, a short symphony,—*Allegro ma non troppo*,—reads as follows:



In the few vocal measures which follow there is nothing to suggest



bird music in general or the song of the nightingale in particular. In the Toy Symphonies of Haydn and Romberg the parts assigned to the toy called "nightingale" consist of shakes and repeated tones on treble G, and as such call for no comment here.

But in Lefébure Wély's well-known and somewhat well-worn Fantasia Pastorale in G, for the organ, the nightingale effect is happily produced by temporarily discarding melody for mere rhythm and writing a series of repeated tones, increasing in rapidity as they progress, and ending with a prolonged shake, *e.g.*:



This notation is again in exact agreement with the song as heard by the writer of this paper in bygone years. Wély's contemporary and compatriot, Edouard Batiste (1820-76), sometime organist of St. Eustache, Paris, although indulging, in his Storm Fantasia in C minor, in a good many thunder effects of "the baser sort," and a good deal of florid melody of the more tawdry type, gives us nothing which can be construed into a representation of the song we have been discussing. Indeed, in general terms, it may be said that modern composers are not partial to exact imitations of natural sounds. As aforesaid, they prefer to suggest rather than to depict, to idealize rather than to portray, at times, perhaps, forgetting that the two operations may be combined in one action, they being by no means antagonistic. But the nightingale's song is neither neurotic nor decadent, but purely diatonic; and as such it is self-excluded from the chromatic environment of so much of our modern music.

And although further passages for quotation could doubtless be culled from the pages of music past or present, ancient or modern, enough has been "set down" here to convey a fair idea of the importance assigned by musicians to the songs of at least two representatives of the feathered tribe, to show the readiness of composers to utilize the "singing of birds" for purposes of local colour, and to their desire in nearly all cases to represent these songs accurately or, at least, suggestively. At the same time the claim of worthy William Gardiner, that everything "passionate and pleasing" in music is "derived from the sounds of the Animated World" can scarcely be said to be proven. The debt of music to nature is considerable but by no means incalculable, for music consists of something far more exalted than the mere imitation of natural

noises. Thus, while it is true, as old Thomas Fuller puts it, that "Music is nothing else but wild sounds civilized into time and tune," it is equally true, as Sir John Hawkins quaintly remarks, that

There are few things in nature which music is capable of imitating, . . . and these powers of imitation constitute but a very small part of the excellence of music. . . . We may venture to pronounce that as its principles are founded in geometric truth, and seen to result from some general and universal law of nature, so its excellence is intrinsic, absolute, and inherent, and, in short, resolvable only into His will, Who has ordered all things in number, weight, and measure.

# LETTERS OF ROBERT FRANZ

By WILLIAM BARCLAY SQUIRE

THE five letters here printed were written by Robert Franz to Carl Armbruster (1846-1917), who for the last years of his life lived in England. Armbruster was intimately connected with the Wagner circle, and Fräulein Cramer, who is frequently mentioned in the letters, will be remembered by early frequenters of Bayreuth as one of the four Youths who carry the Graal in the first and third acts. Franz was a voluminous correspondent, largely owing to the deafness which came upon him in his later years. A collection of his letters, addressed from 1861 to 1888 to Baron Arnold Senfft von Pilsach was published at Berlin in 1907. They are characterized by many bitter judgments of contemporary musicians and do not altogether give a pleasing idea of his disposition. But it must be remembered in extenuation that throughout his life he was a disappointed man. He suffered from poverty, from deafness, and from an affection by which his right hand became almost entirely crippled. Moreover, the period in which he lived was one in which musical polemics were carried on in Germany with a bitterness that now it is hardly possible to realize. The followers of Schumann, of Wagner, of Liszt, and of Brahms fought and abused one another with extreme violence and incredible want of reticence. Musically, it might have been thought that Franz would have belonged to the Schumann-Brahms following, but as this party was more or less allied with Chrysander, whose editions of Handel were bitterly criticised by Franz, who had his own definite ideas of editing Bach and Handel, the Halle song-writer was generally to be found in the opposite camp of Wagner and Liszt. That Franz was, and still is, never appreciated at his full worth, is quite true; but the reason is not far to seek, and various passages in his letters show that he realized it himself. His songs are too intimate to produce their full effect on the general public, and moreover they require a perfection of performance in which the shares of both singer and accompanist shall be fused with a degree of sympathy that is rarely attainable. The admirable article by E. Dannreuther in Grove's Dictionary says the last words on Franz's songs, and is as true now as when it was written. They will probably always remain caviare to the multitude; but, in the history of music, they will keep for Franz's name a place by the side of those of Schumann, Schubert and



**Robert Franz**



Wolf. It only remains to be said that the originals of the following letters are preserved in the Library of the Royal College of Music, by the permission of the Director of which institution they are now printed. I am also indebted to Mrs. Knight for having kindly transcribed Franz's rather difficult handwriting. The translation only claims to be a paraphrase.

## I.

Honoured Sir:

What you write to me about the success of my songs in Scotland sounds to my ears like a fairy tale. For I had not believed that such an immediate effect on the public was possible. Here in North Germany three or four of my songs are continually given in concerts, mostly in surroundings where they make no impression, much less leave any behind. Therefore, when in my last letter I asked you to send me some programmes, I was not thinking of any detailed description, but only of a report of the bare titles, in order to show native music-managers what notice is taken of me abroad. In all the larger towns of the dear Fatherland there live musicians who also have their own goods on sale and are very much occupied in keeping away from their own neighbourhood products which are not yet accepted everywhere. Besides this, most of our singing-masters cannot play the accompaniments of my songs without giving themselves away. These two reasons explain everything! But treat it with discretion, for I do not want to bring more enemies on my head than I have already.

No audience in this country has yet heard a note of the songs by me which Miss Cramer introduced to the London public. I wonder what our concertgoers would say about "Frühlingsfeier," Op. 39! "Who is Adonis?" And then the bass notes in the concluding symphony, in which one hears the savage wild-boar growl in the distance? Apropos of Op. 39, I wish you would especially cherish No. 6, "Altes Lied," with its cockcrowings. It is a great favourite of mine. But you must give a long pause for the moon-speech, and then it will make most effect! The trumpet-sounds and the clang of bells in the last verse are also important. But more than anything it interests me that my Burns songs were received so favourably in Scotland; there must be something in them pointing to national sympathy. I have been for years convinced of the fact that in every genuinely lyric poem the corresponding melody lies hidden. Given the necessary talent, it will then appear inevitably as an addition to the right material. Without having a clear understanding of Old German, Russian, Bohemian, Carniolan, Scandinavian and Scotch national music, I have succeeded in expressing by sounds their strongly differentiated characteristics, a thing that I could do only with the help of the poetical contents of the words before me. This is not mere fancy, but is based on sure grounds, for I have never made music for words, but have always drawn the former from the latter. My songs consequently require the most intense understanding of their poetic basis; where there is this, the right conception of the flow of melody cannot possibly be wanting. If people in Scotland were not intimately acquainted with

Burns' songs, my little tunes could not have made such a lively impression on them; that cannot be doubted!

You speak in your letter of your intention of drawing up for Scotland some day a programme consisting entirely of my Burns songs. There are, I see, fifteen of them which (what is especially important) bring in full force the meaning of the noble poet's lyrics. In "The Lovely Lass of Inverness" it might seem as if my conception of the angry cry "Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord, a bluidy man I trow thou be" contradicted the principles above-stated. But it is a *woman* who, in a moment of the highest passion, is conscious of her helplessness and breaks out to herself in quiet lament. The passage also admirably introduces the close, "For mony a heart hast thou made sair," which would not be the case with a wild curse. Without knowing the original English, I have here and there hit the mark better than the translation. Thus, for example, in "Go fetch to me a pint o' wine," at the beginning of the second verse I make the trumpet sound at the right place; and in "While larks with little wing" my piano accompaniment reproduces the fluttering flight of the noisy bird, of which the original speaks, but not the translation. One may call such things "accidents"; but is it absolutely impossible that my feeling in composing irradiated and understood the originals?

You must not be angry with me that I let myself go so volubly about my own stuff. Perhaps such dissertations here and there contribute to the elucidation of my conception.

I am very glad that you have become acquainted at Dr. Hans Richter's in Vienna with the Twenty Sacred Songs of Sebastian Bach's arranged by me. In them one gazes into the depths of the heart, so that one becomes dazed! It is hard to understand how these marvellous works for nearly two hundred years should be thought unsolved problems, when one looks at the natural form in which I have filled out the harmonies. Hitherto our schoolbooks misused the text as exercises in deciphering figured bass, in which plenty of nonsense can be brought to light. The pedants had no idea that an intensive share in the expression of the whole could be taken by the middle parts; the notes between the Discant and the Bass were stuffed in according to the figures—and so *basta!* If I were in your place, I should try energetically to make these precious jewels known, for *you* will be the first to introduce them in England, where there is certainly a future for them.

I am most highly indebted to Dr. Hans Richter for his amiable participation in efforts at reconstructing the vocal compositions of our old masters. He is a true artist, who with true unselfishness depends only on things, not on people—a rarity of which in these days one cannot speak well enough. You evidently belong to the same class!

With warmest greetings to you and Fräulein Cramer,  
Halle, Feb. 6, 1888.

Yours truly,  
Rob. Franz.

## II.

Honoured Sir:

You have prepared a great pleasure for me by the publication in the "Musikalisches Wochenblatt" of your Concert Programmes; it only proved to me that my artistic efforts are judged more impartially abroad

than they are in this country. If, for more than forty years, one has had to suffer from all kinds of malicious belittling, it can conduce only to satisfaction when, unsolicited, contrary tendencies assert themselves, which cannot possibly be restrained by one's enemies. As I believe I know you, it is hardly necessary to ask that you should get my compositions still further accepted, for, in truth, he only honours himself who strives to establish what he knows is good. As for myself, I do not wish for homage, but only for that justice which is my due. Here I shall not further pursue the inquiry, whether Songs may justly claim acceptance in the Realm of Art; but to have won for them a place of honour in association with masters to whom I owe more than words can express—this I do account as my highest distinction!

Many greetings to you and Fräulein Cramer from

Halle, Feb. 17, 1888.

Yours truly

Rob. Franz.

### III.

Honoured Sir:

I am gratefully indebted to you for your obliging communications and for the accompanying programmes, of peculiar interest to me. The fine success in Cork confirms the opinion that I had formed of the susceptibility of the Irish, a race so highly gifted in poetry. One only needs to have read the descriptions in the "Briefe eines Verstorbenen" to have a lively sympathy for those people.

Vienna is now following your suit. Dr. H. M. Schuster, who for years has successfully advanced along the lines laid down by me, intends to give a lecture on my little tunes some evening in the Wagner-Verein, to be illustrated with musical examples by a young lady, Frl. Maria Wagner. You see that your efforts find a response in this country. The bungling of single songs in concerts has done me more harm than good; the everlasting singing of "Er ist gekommen" and "Danke nicht für diese Lieder" and "Die Haide ist braun" made me look like a recipient of charity! When one has devoted a whole lifetime to the elevation of a particular form of art, such experiences are not pleasant.

If you have not yet decided on your choice for the performance in March, I should like to propose to you No. 5 in Op. 40, "Die Verlassene." There is something to be made out of that song! Perhaps you could continue it with "Norwegische Frühlingsnacht," for both numbers show that I have not been altogether unsuccessful in striking the popular note—in the latter Scandinavian, in the former Old Bohemian—without following conscious impressions in either case. The fact of the mysterious influence of the words on the musical expression, which is the most characteristic feature of my conceptions, is here clearly apparent.

The Sacred Songs of Sebastian Bach edited by me are shortly to be published by Novello in an English edition; I am anxious as to how the translator will succeed with the German words. It is difficult to reproduce their naïveté, and the translator had better confine himself to the general meaning of the verses. With the warmest greetings, which I beg you to pass on to Fräulein Cramer,

Halle, Dec. 8, 1888.

Your

Rob. Franz.



## IV.

Honoured Sir:

Many thanks for your friendly communication. I am still unable to conceal my astonishment that you and Fräulein Cramer can achieve such success with the songs that you perform. It is a fresh proof that concert-goers still can appreciate music which is not superficial, provided that it is accompanied by intelligent elucidations and given in the very best manner. I cannot imagine what the public in this country would say—in spite of the advantage of the German words—to the song "Es klingt in der Luft"! Even if people generally do not pay special attention to the text, it nevertheless sometimes solves a puzzle, and is of the greatest importance for an understanding of my compositions in particular, for they pretend to be nothing more than the robe wherein the poetry clothes itself.

A short time ago one of my songs—No. 4 of Op. 3, "Komm' zum Garten, zu den Wohlbekannten"—was after many years honoured by performance in the Halle Concerts. The singer was no less a person than the celebrated Frau Amalie Joachim. I, a deaf man, could of course not go to the concert, but I heard strange things about the performance from people who knew in earlier years how to judge my little tunes. The lady showed not a trace of understanding for the tender reticence which is absolutely necessary in the case, and as for the accompaniment!—The duet-like melody in the tenor was not heard at all—only the clatter of the demi-semi-quavers! Who can be surprised that the audience simply ignored such a noise? And then people say that Franz's following is never satisfied with a performance! Not even in their dreams does it ever occur to these foolish folk that my songs must be studied. Hitherto I have held that one only improved one's self by entire devotion to one's subject; this mistake—so far as song-singing in Germany is concerned—I shall have to cancel for the present.

I could tell you of strange experiences, did I not fear to tire you. So I surely do not need to enlarge on the pleasure which, by contrast, your attitude affords me, what satisfaction your successes give me, and how grateful to you I am for all this. When I was told that my songs were mangled and transmogrified at the Leipzig Gewandhaus—for instance, in "Es hat die Rose sich beklagt," the conductor cut out the indispensable concluding symphony—I felt that the concert-hall was no place for them, that they should occupy only a modest place in the home-circle. To you both I owe thanks that you have restored my belief in their power to produce a wider impression.

With warmest greetings to you and Fräulein Cramer,

Yours truly,

Rob. Franz.

Halle, Dec. 13, 1889.

P.S. I beg you will be discreet about Frau Joachim's concert-performances, as I did not hear them myself, but rely only on hearsay.

## V.

Honoured Sir:

I am most grateful for your amiable letter and for the concert-programmes sent in a wrapper. It is like a dream when I read about your performances and the way the public receives them. I should

only have to repeat what I have already written to you on this point; but I shall not deny that I usually shake my head when, in reading the innumerable concert-programmes in the "Musikalisches Wochenblatt," not one of my songs is to be found. If they had had their fair chance, it would be mere vanity now for me to complain of their neglect. But notice has been taken of only three or four numbers, and these have become so hackneyed that nobody cares to hear them again. The round began with "Er ist gekommen" and reached its acme in "Die Haide ist braun," finishing up again with "Er ist gekommen." This is no idle fancy, for you can convince yourself of the fact in any newspaper. One of your analytical remarks says that these songs are caviare to the vulgar and require musically educated audiences; with you, such are actually still to be found, while with us they are growing fewer and fewer.

In the year 1877 the celebrated astronomer Edward S. Holden, of Washington, wrote me a highly interesting letter which, *inter alia*, contained the following: "At Inverness last year, in the Druid circle there, with the lovely landscape all around, everything appeared so familiar to me, and it seemed as though I heard a whispering as of olden sounds like those in your noble song 'Es klingt in der Luft,' and your ballad 'The Lovely Lass of Inverness.' I am not sure but that the songs are the real experiences, [not] of the actual scenes, but the shadows or simulacra of them." How strange! This occult influence lies in the words, which bear their melody latent within them and whose realization accords with similar conditions, whether one has or has not met with them in life. Holden continues: "Over my writing-table there hangs a picture of Heine's 'Pine-tree'—your song expresses exactly the same!" It is No. 3 in Op. 16, and would prove a grateful venture for you and Fräulein Cramer;—the first verse barren and frosty in delivery; from bars 17 to 22 warm blood gently pulses through the veins of the longing lover, overflowing him in the second verse as with a glowing flood. See for yourself if I am not right. The tempo is about M. M. = 76.

One of the enclosed notices gives the number of my songs as 237, another as 257. Both are wrong; so far as I know there are 280, and if one includes the six Volkslieder I have arranged, there are 286. Even Dr. Kelterborn seems not to be clear on this head.

To the warmest greetings I add best wishes for the New Year for you and Fräulein Cramer.

Yours truly

Halle, Dec. 30, 1889.

Rob. Franz.

# AMERICA IN THE FRENCH MUSIC OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

By LIONEL DE LA LAURENCIE

**I**T is a matter of common knowledge that the ties connecting France and America are of long standing, and it is pleasant to revert to the fact now that these ties have been strengthened in consequence of the world catastrophe which has definitely sealed the amity of two great nations meant to understand and esteem each other.

We would like, in this article, to trace in the midst of the various developments of seventeenth and eighteenth century French music, the manner in which this music has taken advantage of American elements. At times choreographic and dramatic music borrows dances and subject-matter for compositions from America, at others vocal and instrumental music employs American airs, or airs said to be American. For one is obliged to admit that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in general, paid but little attention to folk-lore of which, by-the-by, they were almost altogether ignorant, and in which they showed but little interest; though extremely avid of exotic affects and characteristic melodies. Hence, while it occurs that French drama, in staging scenes from America, endeavors to secure a kind of local color; and while it surrounds the foreign characters whom it presents with music intended to be representative of the characters in question, this does not preclude but little exactitude being displayed in the matter of transcription. For instance, the Indian savages are not pictured as they are, by the aid of their individual music; but rather as they are supposed to be, by means of a vague melodic and rhythmic documentation inspired by the tales of voyagers and missionaries. "In fact," M. Tiersot justly says, "how were the Europeans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to discover the meaning of music that differed so greatly from their own, when they themselves found it so difficult to put up with the slightest alteration of their own musical habits; regarding with astonishment the difference between Italian and

French music; the style of Rameau succeeding that of Lulli, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The developments of American exotism in older French music are lacking neither in objectivity nor in realism, and we only wish to draw attention to the reservations to which we have already alluded, before progressing to a study of their principles.

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America appears for the first time in the French music of the seventeenth century under the auspices of the dance, and in the frame-work of the court ballet, the *ballet de cour*. As is known, this form of diversion looked on exotism as one of its most powerful means of action, and it was one of the best liked. There were ethnographic and geographic ballets which introduced representatives of the various nations on the stage, and in this manner aroused the curiosity of the spectators by the colorful play of their costumes, and the picturesque singularity of their attitudes.

In the manner of costume the theorists of the ballet show themselves decidedly exigent: "The costumes for the ballet cannot be too handsome," declares Saint-Hubert; but he insists in particular, on the correctness of the costumes, on their being entirely appropriate to the persons represented. "Therefore, one should not so much dwell on the splendor of the dress as on its fitness, and its resemblance to whatever is being represented."<sup>2</sup>

This regard for exactitude naturally showed itself when recourse was had to local color. Hence Father Menestrier designates the costumes which the exotic personages introduced in the ballets should wear, "the various nations who have their own individual costume, which distinguish them. The Turk has his vest and turban; the Moor, his black color; the American, a dress of feathers."<sup>3</sup>

Hence, too, it is attired in the multicolored plumage of the Indians of the North and of the South, that the Americans make their appearance in the choreographic diversions of the seventeenth century.

Here a preliminary observation seems called for: the term Indian does not always convey a precise ethnographic significa-

<sup>1</sup>Julien Tiersot. *Notes d'Ethnographie Musicale. La Musique chez les peuples indigènes de l'Amérique du Nord. Recueil de la Société Internationale de Musique.* Jan.-Mars, 1910, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>St.-Hubert. *La manière de composer et faire répéter les ballets*, Paris, Fr. Targa, 1641. In 8vo. pp. 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup>Menestrier. *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, 1682, p. 143.

tion since, in the literature of the court ballet, it is applied at one time to Asiatics and at another to Americans. Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, we will call Americans only such personages as are thus expressly qualified as being inhabitants of the New World.

The first seventeenth century ballet which alludes to Americans is the *Ballet de la Reine*, danced on Jan. 16, 1609, and whose first "entry," represented by the *Enfans sans soucy*, was entitled "The Americans." Then, in 1620, in the *Ballet de l'Amour de ce Temps* given that year, also by the *Enfants sans soucy*, a certain "Topinambou," addresses the following verses to the ladies:

Belles, je suis Topinambou,  
Venu d'une terre étrangère;  
J'ai quitté mon pays pour vous,  
Mes biens et ma famille entière  
Et, remply de sérénité,  
Je passois en cette cité.

Beauties, my name is Topinambou,  
I've come from a foreign, far countree;  
I've left my natal land for you,  
My goods and all my family;  
And, with my soul now quite at rest,  
I come to this town as your guest.

Strangely brought up, in the fashion of the time, Topinambou continues in a gallant strain, declares he is ready "to play the Cytherian game," and relies on his almost entire lack of costume as a means of overcoming the resistance of his charmers.<sup>1</sup>

With the *Grand Bal de la Douairière de Billebahaut* (The Grand Ball of the Dowager of Billebahaut), whose costuming and get-up were the work of René Bordier and l'Étoile, the part played by the Americans has become more important. This ballet was danced before the king, in the Louvre, during the month of February, 1626, and the court took part in the "American ballets," in which "Atabalipa, followed by peoples and costumes of America," figured.<sup>2</sup>

The personage in question is Atabalipa, king of Cuzco, in Peru, whom a troupe of Americans bear into the hall at the beginning of the first "entry." This individual, destined to achieve a long career in French lyric literature, is purely a figment of the imagination. The history of Peru knows only a certain

<sup>1</sup>Paul Lacroix. *Ballets et Mascarades de cour, de Henri III à Louis XIV* (1581-1652). Geneva, 1868, v. II, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>René Bordier. *Grand Bal de la Douairière de Billebahaut*, Paris, 1626, p. 3.

Atahualpa, a natural son of Huayna Capac who, after a struggle of four years against his brother Huascar, ended by getting the better of him and having himself proclaimed Inca in his place, shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards.

The origin of Atabalipa is in all likelihood to be found in the singular treatise of Adriano Banchieri, published in Venice, in 1599, *La Nobiltà dell' Asino di Attabalippa dal Peru* of which a French translation was printed in Paris, in 1606: *La Noblesse, excellence et antianité de l'Asne. Traduit de l'italien du Seigneur Attabalipa* (Adriano Banchieri). Bordier was evidently acquainted with these works, hence the Atabalipa of the *Douairière de Billebahaut*.<sup>1</sup>

And how do these "Americans" act? Let us see what Bordier says: "Someone said," he tells us, "that these pleasant Americans go clad only in feathers; yet as to that, do not regret it overmuch for, since they go about in a frivolous dress, they easily forgive the frivolity of others."<sup>2</sup>

Incidentally, they defend themselves against the accusation of inconstancy. One among their number, M. Le Comte, recites the following lines:

Béautez, qui me voyez paroistre à cœur ouvert,  
Au rang des Inconstans et des plus infidelles,  
Encore que mon corps soit de plumes couvert,  
Mon amour n'a point d'aisles.

Beauties who see me here with heart laid bare,  
'Mid the most faithless and inconstant known,  
Though feathers covering my body I wear,  
My constant love no wings has grown.

The entry of the Americans soon gives rise to the appearance of a "Ballet of parrakeets." "The former," says Bordier, "have no sooner turned the soles of their feet to the audience, before a troop of parrakeets show their beaks at the gate of the theatre. Covered with a plumage of green, these parrakeets thus display their hopes of a more favorable reception." But, alas, they are playing with fire, for the indigenous huntsmen of their country enter on the scene, armed with the instruments they habitually use. And then Bordier goes on to describe to us this "species of music, whose sound amuses and whose noise astonishes them." The unfortunate parrakeets know not whether to listen or to fly. Some are caught in insidious nets which entangle them, the rest

<sup>1</sup>Henri Prunières. *Le Ballet de Cour en France*, 1913, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>*Grand Bal de la Douairière de Billebahaut*, p. 4.

cast themselves on the mirrors carried by their enemies, without a suspicion "that the cruel hand of the huntsman will seize them." This ballet of huntsmen and parrakeets is followed by one of androgyns, individuals among whom the Count d'Haricourt plays a part, and who as women, carry spindles; and as men, clubs, in order to show that they are able to spin on the one hand, and break heads on the other.

The music of the ballet of the *Douairière de Billebahaut* has, unfortunately, not been preserved. However, a curious design, at the Louvre, published by M. Henry Prunières, in his fine work on the *Ballet de la Cour en France*, gives us an idea of the sort of music which accompanied the entrance of the Americans. Behind a solemn llama, adorned with trappings, advanced a native beating gongs, and surrounded by a troop of bagpipe players. A certain number of American airs were already known in France at this time, since Father Mersenne, in his *Harmonie universelle* of 1636, offers us four specimens.<sup>1</sup>

Of these four airs the first, a *Chanson Canadoise* (Canada Song), whose title calls up memories of the first French explorers in Canada, Denys and Jacques Cartier, as well as of Roberval and Samuel Champlain, is certainly anything but a faithful transcription. The remaining three, on the contrary, which we give here, and which have already been reproduced by M. Tiersot in the article above cited, seem to be more valid.

They follow herewith:



Alluding to Jean Léri's voyage, Mersenne assures us that these are songs of the Topinambous, and that the words of the first have reference to a yellow bird, whose feathers "are used by them in making their bonnets, their robes and several other things." The words of the second song, extremely vehement, carry them away into a sort of "epilepsy." As to the third song, it is used as a lament for the dead, a funeral dirge. One cannot deny that these

<sup>1</sup>M. Mersenne. *Harmonie universelle*, Paris, 1636, Bk. 3. *Du Genres de la Musique*, II, p. 148.

three songs have a primitive and savage character, which testifies in favor of an exactness of notation at least relative. Yet it is quite evident that the musicians of the court ballets gave themselves but slight concern with regard to making use of melodies of the kind in presenting the Americans in their diversions. No doubt they preferred to support Mersenne's singular opinion, according to which "the diatonic being the most natural of all styles (modes), those peoples or races who have no musicians among them, sing diatonically."

Hence we may see, in the *Ballet de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu*, danced in 1641, the music of whose entries has been preserved in the valuable Philidor Collection at the Paris Conservatory, that the Americans take part in the dance (Entry 26), to the following theme:



which, evidently, has nothing whatsoever American about it.<sup>1</sup> With the masquerade of *Les Plaisirs troublés*, danced before the king by the Duke of Guise, in the great hall of the Louvre, and in which Lully collaborated (February 12, 1657), we find again the Atabalipa whose strange and sonorous name was destined to a long exploitation. In fact, Atabalipa, "king of Peru and of the Indians," figures in the eighth entry of the second part of this masquerade.<sup>2</sup>

A few years later Lully was to bethink himself of the Americans of *Les Plaisirs troublés*, since with the aid of Benserade, he introduced them once more in his ballet *Flore*, danced before the king, February 13, 1669, under the caption of "Homage of the Four Parts of the World to *Madame*" the four parts of the world represented by four ladies who arrive to call on all the nations whom they control to attend Flora's fête. Accordingly, four quadrilles make their entrance: the Europeans, the Africans, the Asiatics and the Americans (fifteenth and final entry), preceded by trumpets. When the four quadrilles are united on the stage, they dance together to the music of the *Canaries*, and "form the most pleasing figure which art has thus far invented."

<sup>1</sup>Philidor, Bk. 8, pp. 103 on.

<sup>2</sup>Victor Fournet. *Les Contemporains de Molière*, p. 470. De Beauchamps, Loc. cit. III, p. 143.

*\*Trans. Note: Madame, the sister of Charles II, of England, was the wife of Monsieur, i. e., Gaston, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV.*

<sup>4</sup>Benserade. *Ballet de Flore*, 1669, pp. 34, 35.



Incidentally, fauns take part in their gambols, and several among them rattle tambourines, which provide a new battery of percussives. The ceremony is accompanied with recitations by Europe and Asia, to which Africa and America reply; and, of course, the four continents proclaim that "the realm of the lilies is the first in the universe."

The names of the dancers who took the parts of the Americans in the fourth quadrille have come down to us; they are: a M. L'Enfant, the Sieurs Chicanneau, Bonard and Arnald. Among the musicians who played the *Canaries*, were five "American" men and five "American" women, represented by the older Huguenet, his younger brother, the older La Caisse and his younger brother, Brouart, Marchand, la Fontaine, Charlot, and the Martinots, father and son. Flutes and oboes mingled in the symphony of sound, in the hands of some of the most skillful instrumentalists of the king's household, such as Pietro Descosteaux, Philbert and Hotteterre. All of the music brought into play during the dances of the races is, incidentally, Lully's own beyond any manner of doubt.

The same absence of local color shows itself again in the *Temple de la Paix*<sup>1</sup> danced with the greatest success at Fontainebleau during the autumn of 1685, and one of whose six entries is dedicated to "the savages of America." Now these savages make their appearance to the rondo in 6/4 time which follows:<sup>2</sup>

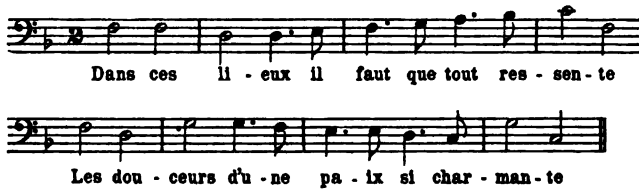


There is nothing specifically American about the inconscient rhythm of this number, and as to the chorus: "We have crossed the vast breast of the wave," it is Lully pure and simple. The

<sup>1</sup>*Trans. Note:* The year 1685, which witnessed the production of the *Temple de la Paix* is also that of the secret marriage of Louis XIV with Mme. de Maintenon, which foreshadows the substitution of devotion for diversion at the French court. In "The Art of Ballet," Perugini says with regard to *Le Temple de la Paix* that "represented at Fontainebleau, it was given by the *corps de ballet* of the newly founded *Académie Royale*, illustrious dancers and scions of the nobility all taking their share in the production. The women dancers from the theatre, who mingled with the princesses and ladies of the Court, were termed *femmes pantomimes* in order to distinguish them from the titled *dilettanti*. Among the amateurs one finds the name of the Princess de Conti; Duchesse de Bourbon, such good old names as Mlle. de Blois, D'Armagnac, de Brienne, D'Uzes, D'Estrées; on the theatrical side such artists as Hardouin, Thevenard, and the amazing Mlle. de Maupin—heroine of a hundred wild and questionable adventures—were among the more illustrious of the singers; while Ballon, whom we have already named, won applause for the energy and vivacity of his dance, and Mlle. Subligny was equally admired for the grace and dignity of hers."

<sup>2</sup>*Le Temple de la Paix.* Bibl. nat. du Cons. p. 143.

second "air of the Americans," sung by the ballet, to instrumental accompaniment:



is neither more nor less than a *forlane*, a dance of Friouli, which Jean Baptiste Duval had described as far back as the month of May, 1609, and which the *Mercure galant* of April, 1683, praised to the skies.<sup>1</sup>

It seeks to deploy those effects of majestic pomp and congratulation with regard to the sovereign which were so dear to the heart of Lully, the superintendent of his royal music. Lully makes an appeal to the Americans of New France to glorify Louis XIV, nothing less; these Frenchmen of the trans-Atlantic are to celebrate the pacific virtues of a monarch who, nevertheless, loved war only too well; and they are to abandon themselves to the idyllic joys which peace regained holds forth, "a peace so charming," as the American chorus sings; while a coryphee declares firmly that the great king is feared "from end to end of the earth."<sup>2</sup> In addition, among the dances which were performed at the balls of Louis XIV, and which were collected in 1712 by the elder Philidor, ordinary of the king's music, there is one *La Jamaïque* (Jamaica), whose title had an American suggestion. The theme follows:<sup>3</sup>



Following Lully's example, Rameau did not neglect to introduce the Americans on the stage. Only, it is no longer the Canadians whom he bids dance, but the Americans of the South. *Les Indes galantes*, of 1735,<sup>4</sup> whose book was by Fuzelier, comprises,

<sup>1</sup>See J. Ecorcheville. *La Forlane*, S. I. M., April 1, 1914.

<sup>2</sup>*Temple de la Paix*, mss. of the Paris Conservatory, pp. 151, 1919.

<sup>3</sup>*Recueil de Danses*, par Philidor l'ainé (1712). Bib. nat. See Fol. 3555, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup>*Trans. Note:* Combarieu calls *Les Indes galantes*, in 3 acts and a prologue, one of the type of heroic ballet already traditional; "in it one meets with Hebe, Love, Bellona, Osman-Pasha, the Incas of Peru, Savages, a dance of flowers, a Persian fête, Boreus, Zephyrs, etc."

beginning with its third performance, an entry, the second, of the "Incas of Peru." The scene disclosed: "a Peruvian desert, ending in an arid mountain, whose peak was crowned by the crater of a volcano, formed of calcined rocks, and covered with ashes.<sup>1</sup> And, as they innocently said at that time, in order to justify this deployment of local color, and the momentary abandonment of the sempiternal mythological and fairy landscape, the Peruvian volcano seemed "even more true to life than a fairy scene, and quite as well fitted to give rise to chromatic music of the symphonic order!" Hence the auditors might be at rest, since the chromatic factor would not be deprived of its rights. The entrance of the Incas introduced Peruvians in picturesque costume on the stage; but the costumes are picturesque along the somewhat arbitrary lines of eighteenth century taste. Among those making up the group we might mention: Phani, Palla, Huajcar; there was also a French officer, Damon, and a Spanish officer, Alvar, both of them very much taken with the lovely Zima. We will not dwell upon the celebrated scene of the adoration of the sun, with its famed chorus "Brilliant orb"; nor will we go into detail as regards "the earthquake," to the uproar of the volcano, which is adduced as a "sensational" example of Rameau's art as a tone-painter.<sup>2</sup>

We will call attention here, above all, to the famous "Air of the Savages" introduced by Rameau in his opera-ballet in March, 1736. This air has quite a history. In 1725, at the time that he was working at the spectacles of the *Foire St. Germain*, the musician had composed a song and a dance intended for the exhibition of the Carib savages who had been brought to Paris. It is this very "Air of the Savages" which appears in the collection of clavecin pieces published between 1727 and 1731 (*Nouvelles Suites de pièces de clavessin*), and which Rameau replaced in the *Indes galantes*. Its energetic, decided theme, as Rameau sees it, takes on a character of the most concise stylization, and is compactly developed in odd rhythmic gestures and beats. Yet it



was in no wise inspired by folk-lore, and its well-defined tonality

<sup>1</sup>*Livret des Indes galantes—Les Incas de Perou, 2<sup>e</sup> Entrée.*

<sup>2</sup>*Indes galantes* (Ed. Durand), p. 206. Cf. *Sentiments d'un harmophile*, p. 71.

and rhythmic firmness lead us to regard it without question as the own musical child of the composer of *Dardanus*. Nevertheless, Rameau took an interest in exotic music; in 1757, in the introduction of his *Nouvelles reflexions sur le principe sonore*, he assures us that he has seen all that Father Amiot of the Company of Jesus, for the space of sixteen years a missionary at Pekin, had found it possible to collect regarding Chinese music; and his heroic ballet of the *Paladins*, composed not long after, and first performed on Feb. 12, 1760, includes a "Chinese Air." At the same time, it was impossible that he should have known, in 1725, the particulars set down by the Jesuit Father de Charlevoix, in his histories of Santo Domingo and Paraguay, nor the same Jesuit father's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, all of them works, in the last analysis, decidedly deficient in information of a musical nature. On the other hand, he would have been able to read the *Histoire de la Conquête du Mexique*, by Don Antonio de Solis, of which a French translation appeared in 1691. Yet aside from some curious details regarding the dances of the Aztecs, and which describe a somewhat clumsy and elementary choreography which would adapt itself easily enough to the "Air of the Savages," Solis' work contains no more than a few lines devoted to Mexican music. He mentions "the flute players, and those who played certain conch-shells which produced a species of concerted music."<sup>1</sup>

It therefore follows that it must, in all likelihood, be conceded that the "Air of the Savages" sprang fully armed and quivering with barbaric energy from the head of Rameau. An anecdote ascribes a most amusing origin to this air. The *danseuse* Sallé, taking a pin, pricked a number of holes in a sheet of music-paper which Rameau had given her, after which the latter gave each hole, representing a note, its rhythmic value, and thus the "Air of the Savages" came into being.<sup>2</sup> However, the famous melody,

<sup>1</sup>*Loc. cit.*, pp. 289, 290. Solis speaks of wooden cymbals, varying in size and sonority, and not without "some sort of consonance." With regard to the dances of the Indians, with head-dresses of feathers and carrying feather scarves in their hands, see the section entitled: "The Great Temple of Mexico," p. 273.

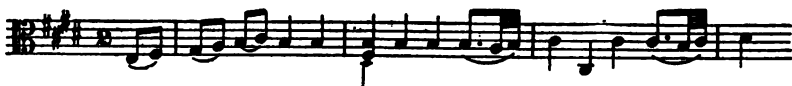
*Trans. Note:* Lucien Biart, in his "The Aztecs, Their History, Manners and Customs" (trans. from the French by J. L. Garner, Chicago, 1887), mentions the *huehuella*, "a wooden cylinder, three feet high, carved and ornamented with paintings, its top covered with the skin of a deer, which could be stretched or loosened at will, according as the players wished to produce deep or rumbling sounds. This drum was played by striking the head with the fingers, which required a certain amount of skill." The *teponastle*, another drum, made in varying sizes, "still in use in some towns . . . has something melancholy in its tones; and is audible at a great distance." A substitute for the European castanet was the *axacoztli*, "a sort of gourd pierced with holes, which was filled with small stones." It constituted an enormous rattle, and was shaken in time with the playing of the other instruments.

<sup>2</sup>Anecdote reported by M. Arthur Pougin, in the introduction to the *Indes galantes* in the Michaelis edition.

which in the *Indes galantes* accompanies the duo *Fonts paisibles*, achieved a decided success, in spite of the satires which the *Almanach du Diable* (The Devil's Almanack) directed against Rameau in 1737. Though Desfontaines raged against the music of the *Indes galantes*, and though he declared that "Nature had no part at all in it"; though he said of the score: "Nothing could be more rough and uneven, nothing less polished; it is a road which one cannot walk without stumbling,"<sup>1</sup> other critics allowed themselves to be seduced by its exotic character, and the *Pour et Contre* (For and Against), came to the conclusion that the music "was genuinely Indian."<sup>2</sup> Rameau himself showed that he was well satisfied with his "Air of the Savages," of 1725, in his letter of October 25, 1727 to Houdard de la Motte. It proves how much he thought of this dance, when he says: "It rests entirely with you to come and hear how I have characterized the song and dances of the savages who appeared at the *Théâtre Italien* a year or so ago."

"The Air of the Savages" had a long life and many imitators. Not alone did Balbastro transfer it to the organ, at the *Concert spirituel*, in 1755; but one also finds an arrangement of it for two transverse flutes, violins or violas in the second *Recueil de pièces, petits airs, etc., du flutiste*, by Michel Blavet. On the other hand, the violinists, the younger Abbé and Tarade, supplied it with variations, and Gardel employs it in his first ballet: *Le Premier navigateur ou le pouvoir de l'amour* (July 25, 1785). Finally, Dalayrac made use of the "Air of the Savages" in the prologue to his comic opera *Azémi ou les Sauvages*, words by Lachabeausière, given *aux Italiens* on May 2, 1787.<sup>3</sup> The *Mercur* of the day regards this interpolation in the mimic and descriptive symphony with which the work opens, as an act of homage to Rameau's greatness.

In the meantime, instrumental music furnished some specimens of American airs. The literature of the bass viol supplies us with the following example, which we borrow from an mss. collection which leans largely on pieces by Marais senior, Roland Marais, Forqueray, de Caix and others. This piece is entitled *L'Américaine*.<sup>4</sup>

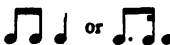



<sup>1</sup>*Observations sur les écrits modernes*, II, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup>*Le Pour et le Contre*, VII, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>The *Air des Sauvages* appears in the bass of the *Allegro moderato* of the Prologue.

<sup>4</sup>*Recueil de pièces de viole avec la Basse tiré des meilleurs auteurs*. Bib. nat. See F. 6296, pp. 144, 145.

A little further on we find the succeeding passage, whose repeated figurations with a rhythm of  or  are not without a certain analogy to those frequently encountered in Indian melodies:



We might mention in particular, the "Fourth Harvest Song of the Iroquois" (Baker), various numbers of the Wa-Wan Press (Miss Fletcher), etc.<sup>1</sup>

The famous violinist J. P. Guignon, published about 1746, his *Nouvelles Variations de divers airs et les Folies d'Espagne*, in which we meet with an "American Air,"



which is carried out in several variations, of which the second is in double-stops, and the third secures a species of bag-pipe effect, with a pedal-point on the tonic D, so that we have an American tune disguised in gallant shepherd style. Among viola airs we find other American remembrances; for instance one which appears in two collections<sup>2</sup> is called *Le Mississippi*.



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It is at this point that we should call attention to *le Huron*, comic opera in two acts by Grétry, with text by Marmontel. *Le Huron* was performed for the first time at the *Théâtre Italien*, on August 20, 1768. To speak the truth, the music of this score does not bear witness of any particularly American tendency; it confines itself to seconding and supporting the moral of the libretto inspired by Voltaire's little romance known as *l'Ingénu* which appeared in 1767.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>J. Tiersot. Loc. cit. p. 159 and 181.

<sup>2</sup>*Recueil de contredanses transposées pour la vielle*. Bib. nat., F. 3643, p. 67 and *Recueil manuscrit* No. 2547. Bib. de l'Arsenal, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup>*Trans. Note*: According to David Friedrich Strauss ("Voltaire," Leipsic, 1872), *l'Ingénu*, "the child of nature," is the best of Voltaire's romances, since, among the more extended tales, it is only one whose characters and incidents awaken genuine human sympathy and interest. Aside from being a work that awakens a real emotional reaction, it offers an admirable picture of the *mores* of the later half of the age of Louis XIV, in which time it plays.

In the shape of a young Huron, induced by his curiosity to visit Europe, Voltaire and, following him, Marmontel, have devoted themselves to a study of the ingenuous mind of the savage suddenly brought into contact with our pretended civilization, which gives rise to a number of adventures which, in the opinion of Grimm, throw into relief the good sense of the "child of nature," a good sense most alarming to his devout Aunt de Kerkabon.<sup>1</sup>

*Le Huron* scored a great success, thanks to Grétry's music. The latter tells in his *Essais* how, with the aid of Marmontel, he composed his comic opera in six months' time. He describes the fear he suffered with regard to the subject-matter of his score, a fear which vanished with its first performance, dissipated by the success achieved by the charming Huron Caillot, who "in savage dress," sang the air: "In which canton is Huron-land?" most delightfully, and by Mme. Larsette, entrusted with the part of Mlle. St. Yves. Still, we repeat, *le Huron* is no more than a score with a psychological trend, and which we only cite because its leading figure is an American.

We have now reached the moment when American history is about to write one of its most glorious pages, that of the Independence of the United States. It is a matter of knowledge that the revolutionary movement, though general in character, had its focus in the province of Massachusetts, and above all, in the city of Boston, which ever since the December of 1773 had revolted against the ill-omened fiscal policy of Great Britain. The proclamation of the Independence of the United States of America, on July 4, 1776, was destined to find its repercussion in French music. The *Mercure* of January, 1780, announced some *Divertissements* for clavecin or forte-piano, containing the "Echoes of Boston," and the victory gained in a naval combat by a frigate over a group of privateers. These *Divertissements* were dedicated to the Duke of Angoulême, Grand Prior of France, by Michel Corrette, who was the organist of the prince in question.<sup>2</sup>

The title "Echoes of Boston" is characteristic. The *Divertissement* is one written in three parts, of which the slow movement in G major, an *Andante* in 3/8 time, is written in the dominant tonality, and is called "The Murmur of Waters." The beginning of the initial *Allegro* follows:



<sup>1</sup>*Correspondance littéraire*, vol. III, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup>*Mercure*, Jan. 1780, p. 190.

The "Echoes of Boston" ends with a rapid movement in 6/8 time, which has been baptized: "The Flight of the English."

As to the naval battle which accompanies the *Divertissement*, it has been developed in accordance with the esthetic laws of the picturesque and descriptive which govern its type, and is inspired by events transpiring along the American coast-line. Corette even invents a sign to indicate how the "cannon-shots" are to be executed on the keyboard. We quote his description, though it is rather naïve: "Strike all the bass keys with the palm of the hand, to imitate the firing of the cannon—twenty-four pounders."

And while our instrumental music draws inspiration from the events taking place on the other side of the ocean, our dramatic music, for its part, celebrates the nation which is about to gain its liberty.

On November 18, 1779, Gardel presented at the *Opéra* a three-act ballet, *Mirsa*, whose action takes place in America. *Mirsa* scored a brilliant success, and Castil-Blaze, followed by Choquet<sup>1</sup> sees in this number an occasional piece: "they were fighting in America," writes Castil-Blaze, "we were the allies of the *insurgents* commanded by Washington; and the English were being defeated in every battle." Théodore de Lajarte has had no trouble in proving that the interpretation of *Mirsa* given by Castil-Blaze, does not in any way correspond with the facts. The long description of the ballet given in the *Mercure* of November, 1779, and a study of the text-book of *Mirsa* prove that nowhere is there any question of battles, "in which the English succumb." The ballet develops, however, a most sympathetic Franco-American atmosphere. It is a little pantomimic drama, whose plot does not lack variety, despite its simple nature, nor even emotion. *Mirsa* is the daughter of Mondor, governor of an American isle. She loves the handsome French colonel, Lindor; but their loves are troubled by the rivalry of a pirate. In the first act, so the *Mercure* reports, one laughs; in the second, one experiences lively emotion; in the third, "one is in turn divided between admiration and joy."

The third act is filled with the festivities celebrating the union of *Mirsa* and Lindor. These festivities take place on a vast esplanade lying in front of one of the terraces of Mondor's garden, and in the presence of the entire family, "surrounded by a crowd of Americans, Creoles and Negroes."

<sup>1</sup>Castil-Blaze. *Théâtres lyriques de Paris*, I, pp. 402, 403. G. Choquet. *Histoire de la musique dramatique en France*, p. 362.



First of all we have a brilliant military parade. Lindor's regiment manœuvres and defiles beneath its colonel's eyes, and a corps of Americans then arrives to draw up facing the French regiment. The governor then has both detachments go through a sham battle, and drums beat the assembly, to the colors, and a "Boston March" as well, whose first measure we quote herewith:<sup>1</sup>



After these military exercises, Mondor proceeds to the marriage of his daughter and Lindor, a warrior nuptial, celebrated to the sound of brass instruments. American officers and American ladies begin to dance, and to borrow the expression of the *Mercur*, "celebrate the festivities with the dances in vogue in their country."

The military parade was well conducted by M. Faydieu, sergeant in the regiment of the Guards. Two airs which above all seem to be connected with America, and in particular with the part played by the Chevalier d'Estaing in the War of Independence (October, 1781), are preserved in a collection of airs in the National Library, and bear the titles: *La Destain* and *Le Retour Destain* ("d'Estaing's Return").<sup>2</sup>

In the lyric tragedy *Pizarre*, or the Conquest of Peru, performed for the first time at the Royal Academy of Music on May 3, 1785, we see reappear Atabalipa, king of Peru, already laid under contribution on various occasions by French music. The scene is laid in Peru. Candeille had written the music of this opera, whose text was by Duplessis, and which had but a mediocre success, in spite of a brilliant cast: *Lais* taking the part of *Pizarro*, and the *Inca Atabalipa*, now *Atabaliba*, being played by Chéron. Mlle. Gavaudan the younger sang the rôle of *Alzire*, while La Guimard and Vestris danced.

In Act one we once more meet with the scene of the adoration of the sun which Rameau had already treated musically. The stage represents the frontal of the temple of the sun, whose ruins still exist in Cuzco, and without delay exotic effects are exploited. A march for the entry of Atabaliba, and his suite resounds: "this march," the book explains, "begins very softly, and increases gradually in power; there are negroes with kettledrums and others with small drums after the fashion of the country."

<sup>1</sup>*Mirsa*. Act III, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Bib. nat. See F. 4865, fos. 55 and 57.

This march is dominated by a commonplace melody played by the piccolo, local color being supplied only by the instrumentation. Then the temple doors open and the high priest issues forth, followed by the young virgins dedicated to the worship of the sun. Now comes a new march of a more pronouncedly exotic character than its predecessor, with abrupt calls:



The high priest then sings the air: "Beneficent divinity," which is taken up by a five-part chorus; then follows an entry, *Allegro molto*, whose minor character is adorned with a langourous theme, embellished by ornamental connecting-links, and supported by the orchestral percussives.

Following this, the Peruvians dance, heavily, to a movement in 6/8 time, where the repeated oscillation on a strong accent does not fail to recall the insistence of accent shown in the first part of the "Dance for the Invocation of the Spirit," collected by Doctor Boas.<sup>1</sup> Yet here the rhythmic stress repeats a fourth seven times in succession, while in the dance of the Peruvians, the recurring stress goes on while broadening out from a fourth to a sixth. At the same time this far-away resemblance is lessened by the fact that the "Dance for the Invocation of the Spirit" is a dance of Northern America.

According to the *Mercure*, the action of the piece gave rise to criticisms which were softened and equalized by its spectacular pomp and the variety of its tableaux, "in accordance with the habits and the costumes of the peoples represented on the stage."<sup>2</sup> The march of the Inca gave pleasure, and it was admitted that his character had been "well expressed"; also, the dance airs seemed to be good of their kind; but in general—and we cannot help but agree with this opinion—the music was accused of lacking originality.<sup>3</sup>

Atabalipa makes a fresh appearance in Méhul's *Cora*, unsuccessfully given at the *Opéra* on February 11, 1791. Only, on this occasion the name of the Peruvian sovereign was shortened by eliding the syllable, and he became quite simply *Atalipa*.<sup>4</sup> Once more we meet with him in the temple of the sun and the Peruvian buildings which form the stage-setting for the first

<sup>1</sup>J. Tiersot. Loc. cit., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>*Mercure*, May 14, 1785, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>*Mercure*, May 21, 1785, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup>Lais played the part of *Atalipa*, and Quito was the scene of action.

act; and again we witness the festival of the god of light, and *Cora*, the heroine of the piece, is proclaimed the chosen of the godhead. She must take an oath of fidelity to the sun; but the unfortunate girl loves the Spaniard *Alonzo*, which fact permits the development of tragic permutations, in the course of which appears a certain *Hascar*, who recalls the *Huascar* of the *Indes galantes*.

Of Méhul's music we will cite the invocation of the priests of the sun (Act III):



in which the composer has evidently tried only to secure dramatic effect, without giving a single thought to local color; while Rameau confides his Invocation to the Sun, "Brilliant orb," to an ascending theme written in sixths, and seems to conform to the account given by the Jesuit Father de las Casas, in the sixteenth century, of the ceremonial of the sun worship, in which this cleric shows us the Inca king leading the chant in honor of the sun with sovereign authority—a song which continues to ascend in degree and measure, just as the planet itself rises above the horizon.<sup>1</sup> And this ascensional character is exactly that given by Rameau to his invocation.

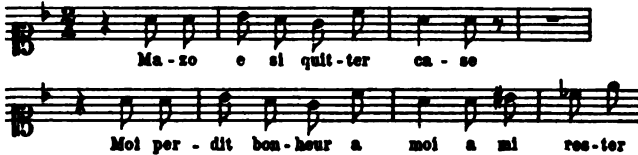
Nor are we done, as yet, with the Incas and the ceremonials of their cult. The publication, in 1788, of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's immortal eclogue *Paul et Virginie*, as a natural consequence focusses the attention of dramatic composers on another aspect of American music, on American negro music. All authors agree in recognizing that the negro has remarkable musical aptitudes. The negroes of Louisiana speak a kind of French jargon at once childish and touching, a dialect associated with melodies whose tenderness and emotional depth cannot be denied. Between the years 1790 and 1795 negro airs begin to make their appearance in musical compositions, and we see Muzio Clementi interpolate in Sonata I of his Op. xxix a charming and caressing *Arietta alla negra*, designating it *Andante innocento*, a descriptive phrase which underlines its childlike ingenuousness of character.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup>*De las antiguas gentes del Peru* (Concerning the Ancient Peoples of Peru), por el padre F. B. de Las Casas. Reprinted, Madrid, 1892, pp. 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup>This theme is then developed in the form of variations.

In writing his *Paul et Virginie*, whose first performance took place at the *Comédie italienne* on January 15, 1791, and whose libretto follows—at some distance—Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's romance, Rodolphe Kreutzer has not failed to introduce negro airs in his score. There is in Scene 1, Act I, a little song sung by *Virginie* to *Paul*, a song which the negro *Dominique* has taught her:



And in Scene 6 of the same Act, there is a chorus: *Petite blancs bien doux, attendez-nous* ("Little whites so kind, wait for us").



The negroes construct a litter of boughs on which they carry *Virginie* while they sing:



When three years later, the subject of *Paul et Virginie* was again taken up, this time by Lesueur, aided by Dubreuil with regard to the text, Lesueur does not seem to have made the effort displayed by his predecessor to give his tunes a folk-lore impress.<sup>1</sup>

Once again we behold the adoration of the sun, which is now introduced, however, in the guise of a *hors d'œuvre*. And this point did not escape the attention of the contemporary press. "The composer of *Paul et Virginie*," says the *Journal de Paris* on Jan. 17, 1794, "has had recourse to an episode foreign to his story in order to extend the latter, one which in our opinion is

<sup>1</sup>*Paul et Virginie*, Comedy in Three Acts, was presented at the *Théâtre de la rue Feytaud*, the 25th Nivôse of the Year II.

hurtful to the principle end in view." The "Indian Savages" sing a hymn, noble in character, to the rising sun, with great cries of appeal carried along on a single note. In the second act there is also a chorus: "To the god of light," enwrapped with an atmosphere of sonority, where the *pizzicati* of the strings sparkle while flutes sing:



Lesueur's *Paul et Virginie* is the last lyric work of the eighteenth century whose scene of action is laid in America. Thus, as we have said at the beginning of our article, the older music of France has borrowed actually but little from American folk-lore, and it has hardly brought local color into play except through the medium of the spectacular. Notwithstanding, it seems of interest to recall that four of the greatest of French musicians, Lully, Rameau, Méhul and Lesueur, have treated American subjects, and have taken pains to characterize the indigenes of America by means of typical themes or an appropriate instrumentation.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens)

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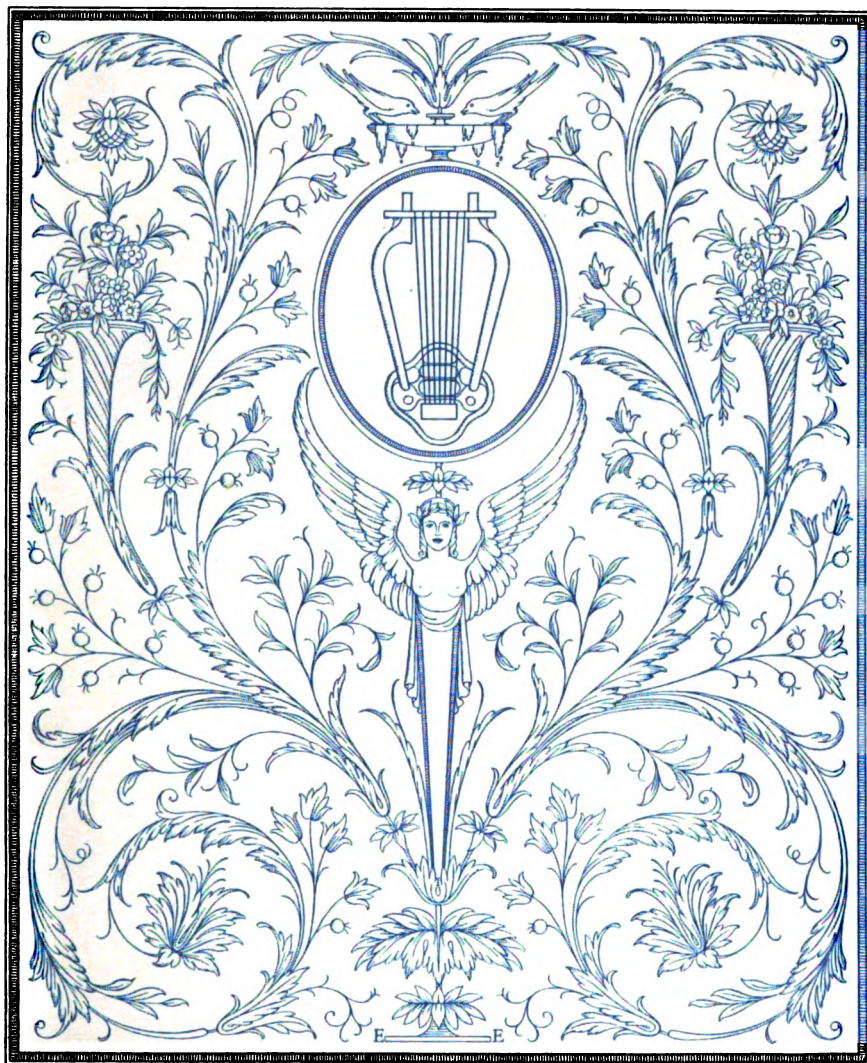
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# **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY**



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JULY, 1921

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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. VII

JULY, 1921

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## AMERICA IN THE ARTS

By BABETTE DEUTSCH

**A**N American poet declares that poetry is in advance of music in this country, thereby opening up a controversy fascinating to poets and composers alike. The substance of this condemnation, if so harsh a word is here permissible, is that the composer has failed to develop a national school, a genuinely American music. German classicism, French impressionism, Italian lyricism have a stamp of their own, which, whether one like it or not, one recognizes as peculiar to itself. But while there are American composers who speak with an individual accent, as a group they have failed to cultivate or to define a national idiom.

The poets, on the other hand, as many competent musicians agree, have triumphed over the diversity of a huge and complex group. They have hearkened to the voice of Whitman, the great forerunner,

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!  
Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,  
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental,  
greater than before known,  
Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,  
I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back  
in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping,  
turns a casual look upon you and then averts his face,  
Leaving to you to prove and define it,  
Expecting the main things from you.

In the Chicago Poems of Carl Sandburg, in the Spoon River Anthology those few indicative words are proven and defined

with a vigor and a vividness not matched by the musicians, whom, it will be noted, Whitman calls upon equally with the poets.

The fundamental question, however, is not which of the arts leads, but rather what is "one hundred per cent. American," æsthetically speaking. What spirit informs Whitman and Masters and Sandburg that distinguishes them from their English *confrères*, as well as from the herd of minor American poets? Contrast Pound and T. S. Eliot with Aldous Huxley, and discover what curious streak of native wit sets them off from the smooth numbers of the author of "Leda." Louis Untermeyer claims that the essential character of American poetry as such is racy youth and energy. But these terms are inadequate to describe so definitely an American poet as Emily Dickinson, whose lyrics, Mr. Untermeyer regretfully notes, have not been set by any American composer. The musicians themselves have been at some pains to define this elusive element. Daniel Gregory Mason, whose friendship with William Vaughn Moody would entitle him to speak if he had never made any of his own interesting contributions to the world of arts and letters, translates energy into high nervous tension, and youth into constant restless motion. This definition, which is also a criticism, may be true of the cities, but it fails to account for a Robert Frost, whom London could not divert from his view of north of Boston, or for the serene and sharp penetration of an Edward Arlington Robinson. Mason, seeking a spiritual strength which he does not find in the pot-boiling host of potential burners of rivers, confesses that it is easier to describe what Americanism in art is not than what it is.

This confession of its negative character is fairly an implication that American culture is polyglot. It is obvious that an artist expressing the Oriental color and golden bloom of California would not be expressing at the same moment the overflowing ant-hills, the steel strength of Eastern cities. The poet—using the word generically to include the composer—who treats of the luxuriant Savannahs does not sing as well of the Great Lakes.

One of the reasons why it is hard to talk about American culture is that we have no American capital from which it naturally flows. Abroad, in France or Germany, in Italy or Austria or even Russia, the capital has long been the cultural centre. Paris or Petrograd, London or Vienna were for years almost solitary lanterns, flashing their rays into the furthest corners of the dark provinces. The United States, on the contrary, because it boasts some three capitals, has actually none. The nervous shriek of New York clamors stridently against the Anglicized Boston accent;

the polite voice of the Back Bay is drowned by the raucous shout of Chicago. There is no cultural *modus vivendi*. One is apt to despair with Mr. Mason, to say simply that American music is not French or German or Italian, on the one hand, and that it is not Indian or Negro, on the other.

This view of a polyglot people is not the least difficulty in the way of establishing a coherent individual art-form. The composer, as Leo Sowerby affirms, is thereby driven back to mere imitation. He instances many who are composing very fine music which, because it is largely influenced by French, Russian, or German models, is neither individual nor national in character. As examples of distinctively American music, he brings forward the first movement of John Alden Carpenter's Symphony, parts of his Concertino, and the last movement of De Lamarter's Sonata for the violin. These things Sowerby describes as our own by virtue of their big sweep, their vigor, their lack of sentimentality, affectation and diffuseness. As a matter of fact, sentimentality is one of the great American vices, or virtues, as one chooses to see it. Even Whitman is sentimental, and no one would ever clear him of the charge of diffuseness. One is brought up sharply by the question as to whether Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Carrie Jacobs Bond or John Gould Fletcher and John Powell are more expressive of these States. But putting this aside for the moment, as not immediately relevant, we are brought back to Leo Sowerby's declaration that while Carpenter, De Lamarter, Powell and Henry F. Gilbert equal in power and exceed in technique poets of the rank of Pound, Masters, Sandburg and Lindsay, he finds that in each case the composers' idiom, as distinguished from the poets', is more a purely personal than a national one. Sowerby's disposition of the use of Indian or Negro tune-stuff as misdirected energy or sheer laziness opens up fresh fields for argument.

For Indian and Negro melodies are our closest approach to the folk-song. And it is the lack of this basic foundation of a national art, declare many critics, that invalidates any discussion of American music. Sowerby's stress upon our Anglo-Saxon tradition should point at the same time to another source of folk-music. The Creole songs of Louisiana, the tradition of English balladry, even more, which still echoes on the rocky trails of Kentucky and Virginia, are too often neglected.

But it is interesting to note that the folk-song itself is being brought into question. As too many cooks spoil the broth, so the number of races confined in our national melting-pot preclude the dominance of any particular strain. Nor can any peculiarly

popular art develop within three hundred years. So the lovers of folk-song lament. Against such argument there is at least one American composer who lifts a protestant voice. According to Emerson Whithorne we are crying for the moon, nay, we are howling for a void. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as a folk-song. Any artist who has worked in collaboration should be quick to grasp Mr. Whithorne's point. The conception of a group creating an art-work is actually as romantic a notion as that of Rousseau's fearless savage. This does not mean that there can be no communal contribution to art. There is no question but that any genuinely popular melody or ballad or dance-step or the racy vulgar metaphor which we despise as slang may change in the process of acceptance. But all of these are the invention of an individual. So too a folk-song, if one examines its elements, is nothing more nor less than a popular catch. It is a song not created wholly and spontaneously by a group—but almost surely re-created by the group. It is like the street-ballad which the organ-grinder wheezes out before your window, like any bit of rag-time chorused by an approving audience. In its pristine state there is small difference between the production of a *trouvère* of Provence or of an Irving Berlin.

It is curious that of all the composers who rush to their own defense none of them mentions the significant potentialities in jazz and syncopation. These are the folk-music of America, whether the musicians like it or not. Lindsay knows it:

The banjos rattled, and the tambourines  
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens!

and

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,  
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,  
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,  
Pounded on the table,  
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,  
Hard as they were able,  
Boom, boom, BOOM,—  
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.  
THEN I had religion, then I had a vision.  
I could not turn from their revel in derision.  
THEN I SAW THE CONGO CREEPING THROUGH  
THE BLACK,  
*Cutting through the Jungle with a golden track.*

It may easily be discredited, as having its roots in that negro tune-stuff, those African rhythms from which we strive to

extricate ourselves. But it has something else, something that is essential to folk-music all over the world: the stamp of popular approval. It is a fact worth noting that the national anthem never is sung with the same hearty joy and strong emotion with which an audience, even of Northerners, greets the tune of "Dixie."

Admitting all this, one cannot help admitting at the same time that poets of the calibre of Masters and Sandburg, poetry like 'Mountain Interval' or 'The Golden Whales of California,' have a quality which is not to be found even in the music of Charles T. Griffes or Henry F. Gilbert. The poets are apt to overlook one of the chief reasons for their own relatively rapid progress. Certainly many of them go the primrose path of popularity, rather than toil to create either a national or a distinctly individual art. But the musicians, giving themselves to an ideal, have a yet harder row to hoe. Mason cites César Franck, working in obscurity forty years, teaching piano to Parisian schoolgirls for a few francs, despised by the academic and the fashionable musical world, as an example of what the composer's struggle must too often be. Mason recommends this arduous ungrateful labor to the talented musician. Marion Bauer explains the slow development of music in America as due to the posing of so strenuous an ideal. And Emerson Whithorne dots the "i" and crosses the "t" by writing musical comedies to Gouverneur Morris's libretto:

He who only toils for fame  
I pronounce a silly Billy;  
I can't dine upon a name  
Or look dressy in a lily.  
And—oh shameful truth to utter!  
I *won't* live on bread and butter.

The path of Parnassus is difficult enough, even mounted upon Pegasus, when the editorial complex regarding public taste clings to the bridle. But if the poet finds recognition slow to come, the composer has more reason to complain. For the musician's lot, like the policeman's in the famous ballad, is not a happy one. In the first place, the medium employed by the composer is far more stubborn than that which the poet uses. The latter is using the oldest and most familiar stuff in his world. It is a common joke that words are a means to conceal thought, and it may be a corollary that they are a means to express emotion. By the same token, music may say more simply and more fully what the algebraic symbols of literature fail to convey. Nevertheless, the poet has the advantage of the composer because while

he has to learn technique, he does not have to learn the very medium in which he works. Edward Burlinghame Hill describes the situation very nicely when he declares that music, unlike poetry, is "a language . . . painfully acquired . . . with few of the instinctive qualities of a mother-tongue."

Furthermore, as Mr. Hill eloquently points out, the student is apt to learn it with a strong German accent or a French turn of phrase. The very process of learning, influences his ultimate apprehension of the thing learned, and the future manner in which he uses it. "Musically," writes Mr. Hill, "we are still *nouveaux riches*, striving to speak grammatically . . . still perplexed as to how to use our musical knives and forks . . . and much inclined to answer 'yes, ma'am' and 'yes, sir' in esthetic servility."

But the difference between the poet's road and the composer's is far greater than this. One can master a typewriter in a few weeks, while the task of writing out laborious scores must inevitably and continuously take precious time from the business of composition. An editor, particularly during a crisis in the paper market, may be hard to reach. But a conductor who will give a hearing to one's score, much less undertake to give it orchestral presentation, or a music publisher who will risk the enormous expense of engraving plates for a book of sonatas, are creatures altogether exceptional. Putting aside for the moment the question of his personal gift and his mastery of technique, the sheer mechanical difficulties which the composer must face are as awful as they are inescapable. And there is no end, not merely to making books, but to making solos and symphonies.

The hope of American musicians, like that of American poets, seems to lie not so much in striving to establish a school, nor even to express an Americanism which is overlaid with older traditions. It lies rather in a frank acknowledgment of their problems, in a sincere effort to express a personality colored by environment but not created by it. The artist is eccentric rather than eclectic, but not for the sake of eccentricity. He is conservative in his appreciation of the foreign tradition from Palestrina to Stravinsky. He is radical in his effort to get at the roots of an art that reflects the oldest emotions in the world, in the terms of his contemporary apprehension of them.

# THE THINGS WE SET TO MUSIC

By A. WALTER KRAMER

**W**HO is not familiar with the novelists' proverbial ignorance of music? how they, in all seriousness, picture their characters listening to "a symphony by Palestrina" or "an opera by Brahms!" Less familiar is the world with the composer's ignorance of poetry, for, knowing that a Schubert set to music poems of Goethe, that a Schumann made his "Dichterliebe" cycle of Heine's immortal verses, we are oblivious of the many songs that the masters composed to poems by men of the fourth or fifth rank. Take Schubert and his "Der Tod und das Mädchen," the poem by Matthias Claudius. Who was Matthias Claudius? Unremembered outside of Germany for his verses, had not Schubert elevated him to a partnership in a master-song. Too many composers in days gone by, as well as in our own time, seem to have proceeded on the notion that their music was *the* thing, that any kind of a poem was usable. Needless to enumerate the many poetasters, who have been honoured by association in the *Lieder* of the great composers: the Schubert song cited above will serve to make my point.

Before the name of Hugo Wolf I must pause. His are the greatest of all songs, as Ernest Newman has told us and as those of us who have studied them and pondered them have found out. Here was a composer who valued poetry, who understood it, who penetrated deep into its very marrow before he began to think of writing music for it. His declamation of the poems of his songs, we are told, was thrilling; and in the recitals of his songs in which he took part in the early days, he always preluded the singing of his songs with the reciting of the poems. Wolf realized that music came to him, and I am sure that it comes to all serious song-composers, *through the poem*; that the quality of the music is dependent on the quality of the poem. Therefore, it is the duty of the musician, so Wolf held, to sacrifice a melodic line, when the verse demanded it, rather than to bend the poet's thought to fit the musical phrase. He knew that when the latter is done, the poet's words are rendered unintelligible. If you wish to write songs, in which the words are not understandable, why use words at all? Wolf, quite early in his career, after composing songs to poems by Rückert, Hebbel, Reinick, Mörike, Scheffel, Goethe, Kerner, Heine, Byron, Gottfried Keller, came to the



thought and conviction that a composer devote himself to setting to music the many poems of a few poets who were dear to his heart, instead of poems of many poets. I do not say that this could be the procedure for every composer; in the case of some men whose taste is less concentrated it would not be done with any success. But let none think that it deprives a composer of variety! Wolf composed the bulk of his songs to poems of the poets whom he loved most, Eduard Mörike, his best loved, Goethe, whom he prized as does every artist, Paul Heyse and Eichendorff. Variety? Is there anything more varied than "So lang man nüchtern ist" and "Hoch beglückt in deiner Liebe," both by Goethe, or the "Nun bin ich dein" and "Schon streck' ich aus im Bett" both by Heyse, or the superb "Gebet" and "Mausfallen-sprüchlein," both by Mörike? There is enough variety in the great poets: it requires a composer of literary discrimination and poetic appreciation to choose. That is all.

My attention was recently called to a statement made in the *Christian Science Monitor* by Louis Untermeyer. More than ordinary value attaches to a consideration of this, because Mr. Untermeyer is one of the exceptions that prove the rule. He is a poet and literary critic, who, I am informed, has a very definite appreciation and understanding of music. In an interview Mr. Untermeyer said that he felt that our contemporary composers in America were very far behind our poets, that we have no creative musicians, except those whose productions were imitative of composers of other countries. He complained that he had not found "adequate musical settings" of Emily Dickinson, Bliss Carman, Carl Sandburg. He complained, too, that he had found no acceptable songs on Walt Whitman's poems by America's composers. I do not agree with Mr. Untermeyer when he says that we have no really creative composers. I know we have; my reason for knowing it is simply that I have followed the output of young American creative musicians far more closely than he has. I know Sandburg, I know Vachel Lindsay—but I am ready to admit that there are probably a hundred names of very individual young American men and women poets, with whose work Mr. Untermeyer is familiar and of whom I have not even heard. I have not mentioned and I do not intend to mention, though I easily could, composers' names to match the doughty names Mr. Untermeyer has put down as leaders in our poetry. But I must cite a great Whitman song for Mr. Untermeyer. Let him turn to "Out of the Rolling Ocean" by Marshall Kernochan of New York. That song is twelve years old; it was published in

1908! Mr. Kernochan is a composer with a literary sense; his songs are settings of Browning, Kipling, Henley, William Morris. I know of one other Whitman song by him, the buoyant "We Two Together," full of the blaze of the sun, a song that really pulses with the poem.

It is true that I cannot speak of composers who have specialized in Whitman, or in Sandburg. I agree with Mr. Untermeyer that too little of our best poetry is set to music by our composers. But that our composers are far behind our poets I will not concede. Our modern movement in American poetry with its freedom of form is surely not an American innovation. Mr. Untermeyer would not care to have me indicate from which European nation's poetry this impulse was received by our younger poets. It is an open secret.

I believe, as a matter of fact, that we are writing too much in America to-day, both verse and music. And with the prolific, comes, hand in hand, the mediocre. Persons are writing songs, who have neither the talent to conceive, nor the ability to execute a conception. Many of these have a tune of some kind, to which they either "fit" a poem, or, worse still, engage someone to write a text. When the product appears from the publisher, the public naturally wonders why such trash has been set to music. Little do they know that the bad music had preceded the creation of the wretched verses. Result: a wretched song. Again, too many composers of real talent write their songs to poems by their friends. A delightful and sociable *quid pro quo*, to be sure, but in the pursuing of it these composers do not set some poems of significant worth that they otherwise would. I make this statement after an investigation of several cases; it is not an utterance based on speculation. Then, there is the lack of real culture in many a singer, which the composer, anxious to have his songs sung—and most composers are—takes into account. A composer told me that he had done a song, in which the word "seneschal" occurred; he had shown the song to some ten singers and all ten stopped at the word and asked *what it meant* and *how to pronounce it*. Does Mr. Untermeyer still wonder why he cannot find a living American composer who has devoted himself in his songs to the poems of Walt, as Wolf did to those of Mörike, for example?

And now a word about the so-called "lyric," which composer after composer seems to think is what he ought to set to music. A song is published with the information on it: "Lyric by So-and-So." I can understand this in *popular* music, for that is probably where the misuse of the word "lyric" was inaugurated. But it

rub me the wrong way when it is carried over into music of the better type. These "lyrics" are the productions of tenth-rate rhymsters who flourish both here and in England. I do not know if the practice still prevails as it did five years or more ago; when these authors of pretty, little nothings (which they dubbed "lyrics") used to have small brochures of their trash printed, and send them to composers everywhere, offering them their verses "for sale." When these awful bagatelles arrived in the home of a musician whose poetic instinct was questionable, three or four of them were chosen and three or four songs to texts of no literary or any other value resulted.

My desire is to avoid personalities in this article. Otherwise I would gladly mention some of these "lyric-writers" and give them a little of the publicity they deserve. Everything is a "lyric" to these poetasters; and in order that their output will fit its title, they write about roses, you, love, heart, sunshine, eyes, smiles, etc. And the songs that are made of them are, of course, limited in character by these extraordinarily varied subjects! That is why a person looking over fifty new American songs so often finds that they are all about the same thing—sometimes as many as two or three of the list of things I have just enumerated. For ten years I have reviewed new music as it comes from the publishers. And in support of what I have said about the big amount of bad verse that is being set, I can in all sincerity and truth record here that I always get a shock, when on opening a package of new music, I find a group or two of songs that are settings of fine poems. Of course we have composers who set Fiona Macleod, Poe, Browning, Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Oscar Wilde, Henley. But they are in the minority. Let me make clear once more that the quality of the music is heightened by fine poetry, that not even a Hugo Wolf or a Henri Duparc could make a beautiful song of the trash, on which so many of our good composers spend their time. I know what will be answered in regard to the matter of setting great poems by men who have passed away. I shall be told that they have been done before, and that a new setting of a poem that has already served for a song is not desired; that publishers will not wish to print it; that singers will not wish to sing it.

This brings me to the crux of the whole discussion. I doubt if there is anyone who has a deeper respect and warmer sympathy for the music publisher than myself, for I am aware of his having to sink thousands of dollars each year in totally unremunerative music. He is in a business which has in it elements both of art and commerce. Therefore, what I am about to say, is in all kindness.

Composers are thinking too much about singers and publishers; publishers are worrying too much about singers and how many of their publications they will place on their programs. There is a blur of business over the whole concert-world, which is an influence quite as pernicious as militarism in an empire. Sidney Homer, a composer, I am glad to say, who never puts to music anything that is not verse of a respectable calibre, told me last winter in a conversation on present musical conditions that the idea of recitals, public performances, etc., was one of real detriment to the serious-minded composer. Did Schumann write his "Nussbaum" with any thought in mind of how often it would be sung, how quickly it would be published or how many copies would be sold? or Brahms his "Mainacht"? And yet these are the things that our song-composers, full seventy per cent. of them, are cogitating. (I am throughout speaking only of our song-composers, as the title of my article indicates.) Let the men who have songs to write forget that there is such a thing as a public: when they do they will not accept as subjects to be set to music the drivel that the rhymsters offer them, calculated by these rhymsters to please a public. The composer will then find in real poetry a true and genuine source for composition. Then an art-song of our day will grow in beauty in America as it has elsewhere, in France in the songs of Duparc, Chausson, Debussy, Ravel; in Germany and Austria in the *Lieder* of Strauss, Reger, Pfitzner, Erich Wolff, Josef Marx, Mahler; in England in the songs of Eugène Goossens, Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter, Arnold Bax and in Italy in the songs of Zandonai, Respighi, Tommasini, Pizzetti and Malipiero.

At a concert in Chicago some few years ago a prima donna sang an American song, composed to a "lyric" so exquisite that Felix Borowski was moved to quote it in his review of the concert the next day and to berate the composer for wasting his time on such doggerel. I quote it here: it brings to a climax my feelings on this subject, one that is so important for the future of the American art-song. Here it is:

Just one thought of me, Jean,  
One sweet thought of thine,  
It will drive all sadness  
From this heart of mine.

Drive away all grief, Jean,  
Life's corroding care,  
Just one thought of me, Jean,  
Holy, pure and fair.

*This is just one of the things we set to music!*

# IMPRESSIONS OF OPERA IN FRANCE

By GEORGE CECIL

ALL things considered, opera is given in France under favourable conditions. True, it flourishes elsewhere in Europe, often yielding the *entrepreneur* a handsome profit on his outlay, and vastly pleasing the audience. Yet, odious though comparisons may be, according to the copy-book, the cold fact remains that the average performance in Italy, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and in those countries which border on the nearer East, is less satisfying than the average performance in France. It may please the easily satisfied person, to whom an evening's outing merely is a means towards an end, a method of passing the hours between dinner and bed time. But the true connoisseur, who understands music and its interpretation, would award the palm to France.

## PILLARS OF OPERA.

Ever since I can remember, it has been the custom amongst old *habitues* of opera houses the world over to compare the present performers with their predecessors, and to the detriment of the former. A hundred and fifty years ago, an English patron of opera published a little book in which he complained that the singers of his time could not vie with those introduced by Handel. Paris is no exception. According to captious critics, the brightest stars of to-day are but the pale shadows of the stars which scintillated ten, twenty, thirty—any number of years ago. And they generally are right. The voices frequently are of excellent quality, but the manner in which they are used, occasionally leaves something to be desired. Whether these artists have been in too great a hurry to make their *début*, and, consequently, have not devoted sufficient time to the placing of the voice, or whether they have fallen into the hands of advertising quacks, this deponent knoweth not. It is, however, beyond dispute that the material is not always employed to the best advantage.

Fortunately, the French lyric stage is graced by Renaud the incomparable, and Lafont, that most admirable *basse chantante*, whose *mezza voce* in "Et toi, Freia" helps to redeem "Sigurd"

from its atmosphere of abysmal dullness. Miranda, too, contributes to the prestige of French opera, for is not her charming and flexible voice invariably heard to advantage in works of the "Rigoletto" and "Lakmé" type? Demougeot is another really fine artist, her Tosca being a thing to remember with genuine pleasure, and Vanni Marcoux is one of the several clever singers to whom the *cognoscenti* are indebted. Franz, who heads the tenors at the Paris Opera, like Chérubin, goes "from success to success," the penetrating volume of his chest notes (which he emits with such enviable ease) invariably enrapturing his hearers; and Rouard, the baritone, another pillar of this establishment, is the happy possessor of one of those "round", even voices which recall Graziani, who flourished about the year 'one.

The beautiful Vallandri also upholds the best traditions of opera in France. Her voice, which is of such good quality, is used in a manner which satisfies the severe critic, and her singing has a charm all its own. Indeed, the Opéra Comique revival of "Les Noces de Figaro" owes much of its continuous success to her fascinating Suzanne, and to her interpretation of the delicious air in the last act—which rings in one's ears long after the performance is over. Journet's exceptionally fine organ is another valuable asset, its sonority awakening the echoes of the Opera.

From time to time Battistini, in whom survives the almost lost art of *il bel canto*, is heard in Paris. The beauty of his ever fresh voice, the penetrating quality of his famous upper notes, the smoothness of his singing, and the perfection of his *coloratura*, come as a revelation to the very appreciative audience. He is the only Italian singer who is engaged "*en représentation*" at the Opera.

#### OLD-TIME OPERAS.

Although the changes often have been rung on the Opera and the Opéra Comique, the fame of the Trianon Lyrique and the Gaiété Lyrique apparently have not travelled far beyond Paris. Yet both are admirably managed institutions, with an invariably interesting *répertoire*, while the singing frequently is satisfactory and the acting most admirable. The prices of admission, too, are more or less moderate, for an orchestra stall, or a seat in the first balcony, costs comparatively little, and if you prefer the discomfort of an absurdly small chair in a cramped box, you pay but a few francs for the privilege of being uncomfortable. The stalls, by the way, rejoice in a "rake"; and selfishly-inclined

ladies are not allowed to obstruct the view of the stage with monstrous head-gear—thank Heaven! Therefore, as the singing is usually more than adequate, and the programme often a particularly well-chosen one, it must be admitted that the entertainment yields value for money.

The *répertoire* at the Trianon Lyrique is a boon to those who hanker after the little-known and forgotten. Here are performed Grétry's old-time "Richard, Coeur de Lion," with the famous air "Richard, O mon Roi", the same composer's amusing "Les Deux Avides", "Monsigny's "Le Déserteur", in which there is a wealth of fine music, and Paër's "Le Maître de Chapelle". The last-named often is given, and if the Trianon Lyrique baritones do not quite obliterate memories of Pini-Corsi, *buffo* and singer of the first order, who sings the *rôle* in Italy, their intentions at least are excellent, while they sometimes are fulfilled. As is the custom in *opéra comique*, a vast amount of talking goes on, since spoken lines take the place of sung recitative. This is to be regretted, as, in addition to boring the listener who wishes to hear singing, and not chattering, conversation is extremely bad for the voice. Besides, it reduces an opera to the level of that most accursed entertainment, musical comedy.

Other works which are performed include "Le Barbier de Seville", which, despite the French origin of its "book", is infinitely preferable in Italian, "La Traviata", "Madame Butterfly", "La Vie de Bohème", "Le Postillon de Longjumeau" (so seldom heard outside France), "Véronique", "Les Noces de Jeanette", "Paul et Virginie", "Le Trouvère", and "Le Châlet" (chiefly remembered by "Vallons d'Hélvétie"). Novelties apparently are not encouraged, and that perhaps is as well, for the music of latter-day French composers of opera is more remarkable for musicianship than for musical feeling.

The Gaiété Lyrique is the home of *opéra bouffe*, *opéra léger* and *opérette*. Several of the pieces performed there, such as "La Cocarde de Mimi Pinson", "Les Vingt Huit Jours de Clairette" and "L'Auberge Tuhoi-Buhoi" contain some pretty and melodious music, which generally is well sung, while the acting invariably is good. Offenbach and Lecocq also "fill the bill", drawing all Paris—as in the days of the famous Hortense Schneider, who sang in so many of these joyous confections. Occasionally *réclame* is sought by engaging some well known artist from the Opéra Comique. Last year, for example, Françel and Carré appeared in "La Belle Hélène" of Offenbach, and, lured by the unusual combination, Parisians flocked to the theatre night

after night. Jean Pèrier also was transferred—temporarily—from the Opéra Comique to the light opera stage, having sung in “Véronique”. This versatile artist’s critics are divided into two camps; those who, while deploring his limited vocal means, go into raptures over his acting, and those who declare that opera demands a voice and that the performer who has a poor one should not seek fame on the lyric stage. Yet the intrepid Pèrier has appeared in many parts, including Don Juan, Lothario and Mârouf, thus essaying a baritone, *basse-chantante* and tenor rôle. “*Il dit si bien et il est si bon comédien*”, gushes an admirer to whom perfect diction, distinct enunciation and clever acting mean everything. “*A quoi bon puis qu’il n’a pas de voix*”, snaps the critic. Luckily for French performers whose voice is not their most prized possession, singers of the Pèrier type enjoy a success which they would scarcely meet with elsewhere. In Italy, for instance, voice, and plenty of it, is insisted upon; and in England the reputed critics are so hopelessly ignorant, and the taste of the public is so appallingly bad, that mediocrity, even unmusical bellowing, is appreciated to an alarming extent.

Meanwhile, in Paris, art conceals art, and with a vengeance! Tenors (especially tenors) come and go; but the old brigade, like the brook, goes on for ever. Their reputation in some cases has been founded on diction, and, long after the voice has lost its pristine freshness, the performer continues to enjoy the favour of the management, and of the public. . . . “My dear, to-morrow is our silver wedding, say, let’s go and hear ——— in ———. We last heard him in it the day we were married; and they say his diction is better than ever.” Thus Darby and Joan. . . .

### PROVINCIAL OPERA.

In the provinces a different order of things prevails. The graces of singing certainly meet with due appreciation, for, go where you will, French amateurs are excellent judges of the details which make up the perfect singer. A neatly executed run, a smoothly rendered turn, an effective *crescendo*, mastery over the difficult *decrescendo*, and so forth, are immensely appreciated by them. At the same time, they generally demand a more or less good voice, though a good voice badly used leaves them absolutely cold, and very properly, too. The French provincial public is by the way of being a critical one; and if attempts are made to foist on it second rate singers, the local opera house quickly loses its patrons. Perhaps that is why one gets such satisfactory



performers at the Rouen Théâtre des Arts, the famous theatre where "Samson et Dalila" had its *première* in France. Alice Raveau, whose Charlotte intensifies the fascinations of "Werther", has appeared there, as also have Chénal (the handsome and statuesque Chénal), Demougeot, Darmel, and many other artists of note. The Lille *dilettanti* also pride themselves on their critical faculty. Catholic as to taste, the Lillois listen as readily to "Les Cloches de Corneville" as they do to "La Tosca", but they refuse to put up with bad singing. However great the baritone's reputation, let him take liberties with the time, and he will not be invited to pay a return visit. The Carmen of the occasion may look the part to perfection, but, if, like Patti and Nordica, she has failed to give expression to the music, Lille will have none of her. Lille, in short, is proud of its reputation, and loses no opportunity of letting the unwary visitor know it. A really patriotic Lillois will tell you that his native town is even more exacting than Barcelona, where Caruso, it is said, could not live up to the *réclame* which was made for him in advance of his arrival. However, Caruso is not likely to sing in Lille: he probably is too expensive a luxury. . . . .

Criticism is less acute in Calais and Boulogne. And that is only right, for, the chorus being recruited from the local fishing element, one feels that neither the Calaisiens nor the Boulonnais would be justified in demanding too much of the principals. Stalwart and well built, these nautical choristers certainly cut a fine figure, and if they are not born singers—well, like the accompanist at the mining camp concert, they do their best. Havre also possesses its Opera Housse, the leading Parisian artists appearing thereat, while the large towns of the Midi and elsewhere are strongholds of opera, Nantes, Bordeaux, Lyons, Toulouse and Marseilles being amongst them. The public, while not hypercritical, demands adequate artists, and woe betide the *impresario*, who, trusting to luck, or to the indulgence of the audience, endeavours to palm off on his patrons a spurious article. Badgered by the subscribers, and attacked by the local papers, he will rue the day that he tried to make money at the expense of his clients (in France anybody who pays for anything is a "client"). He may even lose the subvention without which ends cannot be expected to meet.

#### RIVIERA OPERA.

Opera on the Riviera is a thing apart. At Monte Carlo, where the spring season is run to render the place additionally

attractive, rather than as a money-making proposition, no expense is spared upon this laudable endeavour. The services of the most renowned singers from all parts of the world are secured, and Raoul Gunsbourg, for so many years director of operatic affairs, makes a special feature of the scenery and costumes. A certain number of new works are produced, some of which find their way to other theatres, "Chérubin", "Thérèse", "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame", "Don Quichotte" and many another Massenet opera having been amongst them. Some, less fortunate, are seldom heard of again; while others, at the end of the season, are consigned to the dust of oblivion. This, however, is not to be wondered at; one can only marvel that they should ever have been produced. Nice, Monte Carlo's next door neighbour, rejoices in two theatres where opera is given, one of which forms part and parcel of the Casino. Here, as also at Monte Carlo, during the waits the audience looks in at the tables, the intervals being arranged so that the punters have plenty of time in which to lose more than they can afford. Cannes also caters for opera-lovers, and very well, too. Last year, for instance, with a view to contrast, "Don Giovanni" was given in Italian with Battistini, and shortly afterwards in French with Renaud. As both artists are famous in the rôle, and as each has his own ideas as to how the part should be sung, played and dressed, upon these two important occasions the house was crowded with experienced judges anxious to compare the two renderings. Indeed, the inspiration was a flash of genius; the Legion of Honour has been bestowed for less. . .

From time to time, French operas undergo their first baptism of criticism at Nice. A few come through the ordeal with flying colours; others ever afterwards languish in obscurity, and it is to be feared that they deserve their fate. Though well performed and adequately mounted, they lack that very essential thing, sustained interest. Really, some composers positively have flown in the face of Providence. Their work shows musicianship galore; constructional skill is lavished on each page of the score; and there is no lack of originality. But these abortive attempts to win fame and fortune are doomed to failure at the very outset, for they are nothing, more or less, than a tone-poem set to words, or words set to a tone-poem, whichever way you like to look at it. Melody apparently is the last consideration of these well-meaning geniuses. In France, as in other countries, it is considered by those who pay for the privilege of listening, that music without melody defeats its purpose. This possibly is the reason that

Massenet is so popular throughout France. The "high brows" jeer at him as a feminist composer of sugary ditties intended for the delectation of sentimental men and women incapable of appreciating really well thought-out music; music with a purpose, they will tell you, was beyond Massenet, and that he scarcely is less trivial than Bellini. In justice to the dead composer, it may be pointed out that if his "purpose" was to provide managers with operas which drew large audiences, he, at least, did not descend to writing rubbish, and that in nearly all his scores, original and distinctive melody, page upon page of it, is to be found. He certainly never claimed to be a master of orchestration; but his accompaniments invariably fit in with the words and with the situation, while the simple harmonies which he employs always are appropriate. In a word, respect for Massenet is not lessened by the popularity of his successful works.

It may be noted that singers of eminence have associated themselves with several of the operas which of late years have been produced at Riviera theatres. Calvé, for example, headed the cast at the *première* of Reynaldo Hahn's "La Carmélite; Chaliapine (Russians declare that he still is in the land of the living) appeared in "Don Quichotte" and Mary Garden in "Chérubin;" and Renaud created the part of Boniface in "Le Jongleur"—as "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame" is affectionately known in operatic circles. Saint-Saëns' "Hélène" also had its first performance under happy auspices, Melba singing the title-rôle.

#### UNSUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISE.

Opera is so well established in Paris, and there is so much of it, that fresh enterprise seldom meets with success, even when success is merited. Recently, for example, the Vaudeville Theatre was renamed the Théâtre Lyrique, newly decorated, swept and garnished, and opened as an opera house, in opposition, perhaps to the Opéra Comique. A start was made with Massenet's "Cléopâtre," a work in which, alas, the composer does not show to his customary advantage. An almost interminable string of Cléopâtres, including Mary Garden and Kousnietzof, were amongst the attractions, and Renaud, as Marc Antoine, invested the music with all the distinction of which he is so complete a master. "Il Barbier" with an Italian cast, and "Tarass Boulba," a new, and, it must be confessed, disappointing work, were included in the *répertoire*. So, too, was the unequal "Méfistoféle,"

with Vanni Marcoux's sardonic reading of the name-part. The novelty, however, did not fulfill the hopes of its promoters. Good houses owed their appearance largely to *billets de faveur*, and the expenses were heavy. "Will anyone make money out of it?" asked the gossips. "Yes" was the reply, "the artists will! For the management has money to burn." Presumably they burned it, since, after a few weeks, the undertaking proved to be but an ephemeral affair, and the Théâtre Lyrique once more became, as of old, the Vaudeville. Comedy is now played there. *Sic transit*. The Théâtre des Champs Elysées, which consists of a large and a small theatre, also has again been turned to operatic account, with a revival of "Quo Vadis," in which Battistini made a few welcome appearances. The season, however, did not endure very long. Perhaps the poster, which gave the impression that "Quo Vadis" is a circus, rather than an opera, failed to impress the public. A season of Italian opera also was tried, the diverting and melodious "Don Pasquale" of Donizetti being the opening attraction. Owing to the difficulties in obtaining a license to keep the theatre open later than eleven o'clock, and to the appalling unpunctuality which obtains in French musical circles, the final act, with the alluring *duettino*, "Tornami a dir," had to be cut. With this inauspicious opening the venture came to an end. Its untimely demise is to be regretted, for in a music-loving and cosmopolitan town like Paris, Italian operas performed in the vernacular, and by competent Italian singers, might prove a "draw." Such works, especially those of a semi-*buffo* type, when sung in French leave something to be desired, while the Italian language is in itself a delight and an education to those who possess a musical ear. Southern artists certainly do not always rely for their effects upon the graces of singing, as do the French; their habit of showing off the voice by holding on to a note with all the breath in their bodies does not commend itself to an audience whose taste has been cultivated in a more refined school. But, as practice is said to make perfect, just as a succession of errors may lead to ultimate success, there is no reason why intelligent Italian singers should not learn to sing according to the dictates of Paris taste.

It may be added that Italian opera always was, still is, and probably always will be popular in Paris. With *la lingua Toscana* as an added inducement, a well managed season should add to the gaiety of the town, and, incidentally, put money into the pocket of its *impresario*. Stranger things have happened in the operatic world. . .

## VARIOUS MATTERS

Certain operas seldom are heard outside Paris, while others, except for an occasional revival, are relegated to the provincial programme. "Goyescas," "La Légende de St. Christophe," "La Rotisserie de La Rue Pédauque (the plot of which is taken from Anatole France's book of the same name) and several others, do not travel, but "Guillaume Tell" and "Les Huguenots" apparently have been made over to the provinces. Nor is it surprising that the two last-named seldom are heard in Paris, for it surely must be admitted that they have many dull moments. It is difficult, too, to find a competent tenor for the *rôle* of Arnold, Rossini having written mercilessly for Mathilde's not particularly interesting lover. As to "Les Huguenots," almost every dramatic soprano, *colorature*-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, *basse-chantante* and bass throughout the realm of opera knows this abnormally long work. Consequently, it can be put on at short notice. "Huguenots to-morrow night," wires the provincial manager to his Paris agent, "can you send me a Raoul, a St. Bris and a Valentine." "Can send you three of each" is the reassuring answer. The name-part in "Guillaume Tell" also is more or less easily filled, for there are several baritones possessing the quality of voice, and the dramatic capabilities which the arduous *rôle* demands, amongst them being Boulogne, a singer of exceptional merit. Indeed, the last-named is so fine an artist that his presence in the cast infuses new life into the somewhat antiquated opera.

Several once popular works, such as Cherubini's "Les deux Journées (Cherubini, according to George Moore, is the last of classical composers), "Le Bal Masqué," "La Favorite," "La Flute Enchantée," "Lucie de Lammermoor," "La Juive," Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine" and "Le Prophète," and many another, have more or less disappeared from the *répertoire*. So also has Méhul's "Joseph et ses Frères," which is so delightfully reminiscent of Mozart. Indeed, it is years since it has been heard in Paris, though, sometime ago, it was given in the Château chapel at Versailles in aid of charity. Recently, "Cosi fan tutte" was revived at the Opéra Comique, where this interesting example of Mozart's genius had been in rehearsal for some months past. *A propos*, the Opéra Comique company being a stock one, there is time for leisurely rehearsing, and the brothers Isola (who so successfully manage the concern) see to it that no work is presented to the public till it has been adequately prepared

down to the minutest detail. Indeed, quite a respectable number of novelties and revivals figure in the list during the year; for the company being a large one, its resources, so far as *répétitions* go, are almost limitless. Whether some of the productions which are rehearsed so assiduously are, from the artistic standpoint, worth the trouble bestowed upon them, is another matter. . . . Still, whatever the value of the music, the theatre invariably is crammed to its very walls, be the opera "Manon," or "Mignon," or "Carmen," all of which have been performed there several times a month for very many years past, or "La Rotisserie de la Rue Pédauque," which had its *première* a few months ago. The success of this theatre is, in fact, extraordinary. The Opera, according to the papers, does little more than pay its way, and can only afford to open its doors a limited number of nights a week. The Opéra Comique, on the other hand, in addition to giving seven evening performances a week all the year round, announces innumerable *matinées*. It is indeed a paying proposition . . .

In happy pre-war days, Paris welcomed Richard Strauss' "Rosencavalier," and Wagner was appreciated throughout France. Parisians, forgetting that they had greeted the production of "Tannhäuser" with toy balloons, which, upon bursting, emitted a most pestiferous odour, and that at the conclusion of the hunting scene, with which the first act closes, the dogs alone were applauded, have learned to look upon the opera as a master-piece. The most noted artists have pined to appear in the once hated work, as the pious Wolfram, as the dignified Landgraf, and as the forgiving Elizabeth; and each member of the orchestra has taken a personal interest in the music. "Les Maîtres Chanteurs" and "Lohengrin" were acclaimed in every important opera-house in France; and even the somewhat tedious "Ring" was listened to in respectful silence, though eventually the irrepressible wits of journalism laughed at its *longueurs*. But the moment war was declared, scores and orchestra parts were put away; and, until recently, no manager has dared to propose reviving the works of a German who died many years before hostilities were contemplated, and who was, into the bargain, "agin' the government." All one heard of Wagner was an occasional excerpt at a concert, and it was only after considerable opposition that the public has been brought to tolerate a less trifling return to pre-war conditions.

#### OPEN AIR OPERA.

Although the French have a horror of draughts, a horror which has been handed down from generation to generation, they

show their practical appreciation of the fresh air by supporting *al fresco* performances of opera. These are given during the summer, the best known being those which take place in the gardens of the Tuileries, where abridged versions of popular works, such as "Mireille," "Lakmé" (in which Mignon Nevada lately made a very successful "guest" appearance at the Opéra Comique), "Rigoletto," "Le Trouvère," and the eternal "Noces de Jeannette," are performed. There positively is no getting away from the rather tiresome "Noces de Jeannette," with its bucolic humor and insipid music. If "Cavalleria Rusticana" (which does not go well in any language but Italian) cannot be performed, Victor Massé's artless strains fill the theatre, the enraptured audience drinking in "Cours, mon aiguille" as though they had never heard it before, and applauding the loutish husband's drunken frolics as being the acme of high comedy. "Mignon," too, is given, as also "Manon" and "La Fille du Régiment," the famous "Rat-à-plan" duet (in which the warlike sergeant reminds the metamorphosed Marie of her younger days when she was borne on the strength of the regiment) invariably gaining the honours of a *bis*. Upon these occasions the performance is worth far more than the few francs which one's seat costs, for, thanks to the good use which the artists make of the "*fosse nasale*", their voices carry admirably, while the acting often is all that could be desired. "Faust" also is heard under these conditions, and the choice invariably meets with approval. At the Opéra, however, the audience views Gounod's music in quite a different light. Upon "Faust" nights subscribers lend their boxes to their friends and poor relations, and the pen and ink artists of the comic papers make sorry jests at the expense of the immortal work, those who are present in the boxes being depicted playing bridge, or discussing politics and *chiffons*—according to their sex. So nothing, you see, is sacred to the scoffer, not even the gorgeous final trio. . . .

Open-air representations of "Carmen" occasionally have taken place, and with *éclat*, particularly if the arena at Vichy has been used for the purpose. Principals of repute have figured in the cast; Escamillo has addressed his song to the genuine article, a real bullfighting personnel having been imported from Spain; and the town itself and the neighbouring villages have furnished a stage crowd of huge proportions. Up till now no manager has succeeded in finding a *toreador* who combines with the slaughtering of bulls the gentler art of singing about it. Yet there is hope, for the song in question demands a strong pair of lungs rather than an accomplished singer. Bizet, in fact, wrote it for that purpose.

When "Carmen" was produced (with Galli-Marié in the name part) it failed, the ill-informed critics declaring that the music was devoid of local colour. "And this," tearfully wailed the poor composer, "after I have spent weeks in Spain permeating my mind with local colour!" So, in a pet, he composed the "Couplets du Toréador," dedicating the noisy ditty to "*la canaille*." "It is all," quoth he, "that they are fit to understand." The absurdity of a bull-fighter describing a bull-fight to his brother bull-fighters and to a stage audience which patronises a bull-fight regularly every Sunday afternoon doubtless suggested itself to him. To-day "Carmen" is as much liked as any work on the list. It probably is played many times a week throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Fired by the example of the Cairo Khedivial theatre authorities, who celebrated a certain anniversary of the opening of the theatre by having "Aida" performed in the open air with the Pyramides for a back-ground, one or two enterprising theatrical magnates have gone into the question of giving the opera in France under much the same conditions, with card-bound Pyramids and imported sand to represent the desert. The late Oscar Hammerstein is said to have thought the idea feasible, and to have called for Pyramid designs. His unfortunate London Opera House speculations, however, interfered with a somewhat riotous fancy. . . .

#### WAR ACTIVITIES.

. Upon the declaration of war, operatic activities ceased immediately. Male singers below a certain age were at once mobilized, and many a patriotic Elsa, Santuzza, Micaëla, Lakmé and Rosine took lessons in "first aid," and tended the wounded, just as Marie Röze did during the Franco-Prussian war. By degrees, the older men were "called to the colours," while numerous artists who were prevented by imperfect health, and for various other reasons, from doing as their younger *camarades* had done, took up "war work" at bases. Thus, a percentage of opera singers, though deprived of their income, at least were able to earn a living. Many, however, were not so lucky. The Government sternly forbade any sort of *spectacle*; and until permission was obtained to re-open the theatres for an occasional performance, their state was pitiable. For, in many cases, the small savings which they had laboriously acquired soon were exhausted. In Paris parties of them might be heard singing concerted pieces from the different operas in the courtyards of the



big apartment houses, the inhabitants of which willingly contributed their mite, often a substantial one. Numbers of those before whom they sang made a point of inviting them to lunch, or dinner, on certain days, doing so with that charming tact and grace which are so essentially French. Later on, the position improved; and by the beginning of 1917 representations had again become general, artists even being released from semi-active service for the purpose of taking up their old career. The tenor doffed the steel helmet and *bleu horizon* of his *cuirassier* regiment for Don José's lancer cap and gaudy yellow tunic, and the baritone returned his rifle and bayonet to stores, and grasped the property sword with which Valentine keeps Mefistophélès at bay. Franz, freed from his duties as *maréchal des logis* (the non-commissioned officer who makes the billeting arrangements) once again was heard at the Paris Opera in "Le Cid." Renaud, wounded, his broad breast blazing with decorations, and covered with glory, also reappeared. One of his first performances was at Rouen, where he sang Athanâel in "Thaïs," a rôle in which, it may be remembered, he achieved much success at the Manhattan Opera House, New York.

Upon the re-opening of those theatres which were closed during the earlier stages of hostilities, artists who hitherto had been kept in the background at last were afforded the opportunities for which they had so long waited, and they certainly made the most of their chances, both in Paris and in the provinces. In fact, during this period the singing was generally more satisfactory than it had been prior to the war, for it must be confessed that some of the older generation of performers were simply trading on their reputation. Really competent singers found themselves promoted to positions to which they might otherwise have aspired in vain. A small touring troupe, for instance, which visited the Northern towns shortly before the Armistice, and which was mainly composed of little-known artists, sometimes gave really admirable performances.

There was a distinct element of uncertainty and excitement about these bravely organised affairs. The train accomodation being mostly required for the transport of troops, the singers could not always depend upon reaching their destination in time for the performance; many owed their arrival at the theatre to the friendly offer of a lift in a passing army motor-lorry. Make-shift scenery and hastily extemporised costumes had to be used; mediæval Faust wooed Marguerite in the same modern village square in which the callous Turiddu spurned the outraged Santuzza,

and the Indian bazar in which Lakmé sang "Où va le jeune Hindou?" did duty for the first act of "Werther." Orchestra rehearsals were made impossible by lack of funds, according to the managers, and, according to the instrumentalists, by managerial greed. Consequently, all sorts of unrehearsed effects occurred, such as the curtain rising before the scene was completely set and falling upon the hero at the psychological moment when he was about to bring down the house with a chest note *in alt*. At a Calais *matinée* of "Rigoletto," for instance, it rose no fewer than three times upon the first act; once before the overture was finished, and the third time, despite the frantic exhortations of the frenzied conductor, it did not move an inch till several pages of the act had been played.

Upon another occasion an air attack interfered with the proceedings at the Calais Opera House. The night was so inky-black that the military authorities considered a raid unlikely, the enemy being averse to darkness because of the risk which they ran of being "picked up" by searchlights. Eight o'clock arrived, and the curtain rose on the first act of "Mignon." At first all went merrily as the proverbial marriage-bell. The fishermen-choristers showed to advantage in the opening drinking chorus, which, dealing, as it does, with their favorite tipple, was sung *con gusto*. Lothario's pathetic air moved the packed house to emotion; and the much-persecuted heroine's sorry plight speedily enlisted the sympathies of every man, woman and child in the audience. Then came the catastrophe. The "*Duo des Hirondelles*" was in progress; Lothario had declared that Mignon's voice rejuvenated his ancient guitar, and Mignon had addressed herself to the "*oiseaux bénis de Dieu*," when the syrens in the harbour gave the usual warning. "*Tenez, je n'aime pas ces oiseaux-là*" observed a local jester. "*Ils ne sont pas bénis de Dieu; pas du tout. Je me sauve!*" The conductor hurriedly laid down his *bâton*; the members of the orchestra swiftly beat a retreat; and Mignon and Lothario, racing for the wings, sought shelter in a cellar, where they were joined by the stage hands, the other principals already having left the building. The audience, being thoroughly accustomed to air attacks, took matters coolly; to the accompaniment of incessant firing they sought the various subterranean shelters in the neighbourhood of the theatre, and there awaited the welcome "all clear" signal. Nor had the syrens given the warning any too soon, for scarcely had the house emptied itself than the first bomb, a two hundred pound one, fell—and only a few hundred yards from the theatre. Bang went another, and another, bringing

down tons of bricks and mortar, the "barrage" put up by the French and British batteries failing to deter the adventurous Boche spirit.

An hour passed without any firing, and people began to ask why they should continue to remain in a state of discomfort, when a listening post, many *kilomètres* away, 'phoned the approach of the enemy. The sky speedily became ablaze with search-lights, and the batteries again opened fire, and with deafening roar, too, when several guns were fired simultaneously. Finally, at midnight, the anxiously awaited signal was given, and the audience went to bed, glad to have escaped with their skins, though their pockets, owing to the interrupted performance, had suffered.

#### THE INDISPENSABLE FOYER.

The French, taking a pride in their public buildings, see to it that the theatre is worthy of its surroundings. (The Lille Opera House, for example, is a particularly imposing one. Commenced before the war, the Germans, upon occupying the town, completed it; and the English, having ousted the unwelcome visitors, sacrilegiously produced the musical comedies of their native land.) With scarcely any exceptions worth mentioning, the acoustics throughout France generally are all that can be desired, while the decorations often are tasteful, the *foyer*, in particular, coming in for a large share of the architect's and decorator's attention. The *foyer*, in short, is looked upon as a meeting-place, a club, where friends and acquaintances foregather to pass the time of day, to discuss the singers, and—most important thing—to be seen. Indeed, to many people the *entr'acte* is as precious as the performance, and the management, recognising this, caters for popular taste by allowing as much as half an hour for a wait. As the proceedings often are late in beginning, the opera may finish at an hour which seriously curtails the sleep of those who have to be up early the next day. Fortunately, the scarcity of coal occasionally acts as a bar to lengthy intervals, for the municipal authorities, sternly setting their faces against the wasteful expenditure of electric light, do not allow the performance to continue after eleven o'clock. An excellent rule!

France being pre-eminently a land of trades unions, managers sometimes are confronted with strikes. The singers do not strike; but the musicians and the stage hands spare no expense in this direction. Upon the occasion of a *grève*, there is nothing for the harassed *impresario* to do but to close the theatre and to

await developments, unless he finds it to his interest to accede to the demands of the strikers. The artists, without expressing an opinion one way or the other, willingly take part in performances arranged by malcontents, the proceeds being devoted to the funds required for carrying on operations. They thus display tact, for, until the dispute is settled, their means of earning a living are at an end, unless they have the good fortune to be paid by the month instead of "*par représentation*." Last year the Paris Opera suffered severely from a series of strikes.

Evening dress, by the way, is not insisted upon in the more expensive parts of the theatre. The women certainly make the most of the opportunity to deck themselves out in the height of the mode (when does a woman neglect a chance of wasting money on fallals?) The men, however, content themselves with a morning coat, many wearing the same suit in which they set about their business first thing in the morning. Dinner jackets are not uncommon; but the time-honoured "swallow-tail" is rarely seen, even in Paris. Many uniforms are dotted about, and very attractive they are, too, with their varied colour-scheme and rank distinctions in gold or silver lace, or both. Khaki also is on view, for British officers from the Rhine Army of occupation have the good taste to spend their leave in Paris and in other towns where opera is given.

### THE CRITICS.

The standard of criticism is above the average, both in Paris and in the provinces. But newspaper space is valuable, the daily papers being comparatively small; consequently, detailed criticism of the singing sometimes has to be omitted. Though unavoidable, this is none the less tiresome, for when a distinguished artist undertakes a *rôle* in which other famous singers have appeared, and which bristles with difficulties, one naturally wishes to know what a competent critic has to say about the artist's singing and about his, or her, conception of the part. To be baldly informed that "So-and-So, as Scarpia, was wholly effective" conveys nothing. A Scarpia who sings through the strenuous second act sitting on the sofa might be effective; but the intelligent amateur wishes to be told if the music is in the newcomer's voice, and if his reading of the character differs from that of other baritones. Novelties certainly meet with more attention, but even then so much is said about the score and the plot that a criticism of the actual performance has to be crowded into a few lines.

Some of the critics, by the way, have a pretty wit, amongst them being Georges Boyer of "*Le Petit Journal*." Upon one occasion Boyer was asked by a soprano to differentiate between the several feminine voices. "There is," quoth the oracle, "the voice of the soprano, the voice of the contralto, and the voice of la Patti!" When "*Cléopâtre*" was produced at the Théâtre Lyrique, the frankly Anglo-Saxon accent of an English member of the cast drew from him the remark: "I did not know till now that even in the days of Cleopatra the English had got as far as Egypt." Boyer also had a ready answer when he found himself in opposition to the Lyrique *direction*. "So I am not welcome? Never mind, the next management will perhaps be glad to see me—in two or three days". The following week the operatic venture was at an end. . . . .

It is the aim of every French singer to be engaged by the year, at the Paris Opera, and to receive a monthly salary. With regular work and regular pay, their future is more or less assured, for the appointment (which may last a life-time) carries with it a certain *cachet*, and the duties do not interfere with the pleasures of existence. The evening performance, however, sometimes prevents an artist dining out. "Will you come to dinner to-night?" demanded a hospitable host of a popular baritone, who has been engaged at the Opera for countless years. "A thousand regrets," replied Amonasro, who was taking part in the performance of "*Aida*" that evening, "I have to go to my *bureau*."

# BUSONI

By JEAN CHANTAVOINE

**I**F Ferruccio Busoni were in every sense of the word merely an incomparable pianist he would more than merit being spoken of as exhaustively as I propose to do. What has not been written of the pianistic prowess of Chopin, Liszt, Rubinstein, or Planté? Then how much more may be said in praise of Busoni's marvelous virtuosity, of the dazzling effect of his playing, unequalled because it resembles nothing we have ever heard before, of the infinite subtlety of touch, of the indescribable nuances, of the lightness, force, grace, daring, and above all, of the poetry which emanates and radiates from the piano! It is supreme mastery; but how is it possible to express the magic of this negation of matter by the spirit? He brings voices out of the instrument which no one else has ever brought out—heavy thunder, unearthly sighs, the souging notes of the organ, the blare of trumpets, pearly flute-like notes, the caressing tones of a violin! At first his prodigious technic seems to overwhelm everything else, as he overcomes the greatest difficulties with consummate ease and apparently without realizing that they are there; however, one quickly loses all thought of technic. I repeat that Busoni is incomparable. If a comparison were possible, I would say he has surpassed Rosenthal. For example, the "Etudes d'après Paganini" or the "Etudes d'Exécution Transcendante" of Liszt become more brilliant, more scintillating, under his fingers, than it is possible to imagine; they seem easy, because their soaring flight cannot be measured. As to the manifold relief which Busoni gives to the polyphony of Bach, particularly remarkable in his magnificent transcriptions of the organ works for the piano, he holds the key to a secret unknown to his predecessors. A good judge who heard him for the first time at the Salle Erard in 1914 said: "Even Liszt did not play as well."

Such a degree, even more, such quality of virtuosity, wholly without trace of effort, or of mechanism, suppose and reveal in themselves the necessary gifts for such a magician. In listening to Ferruccio Busoni, one is inevitably drawn to the conclusion—no matter what tenacity he may have shown in the acquisition of his art—that he was born with what so many others strive to obtain by right of conquest. The phenomenal agility

of his fingers, his supple wrists of steel, would be nothing, if they were not inspired by a brain of extraordinary power and delicacy. If we follow the interpreter's flight, this certainty is soon confirmed and, while forgetting our astonishment and freed from the dominating idea of technic, amazing revelations follow in which the intuitive glance plumbs to the depths of genius, resuscitating Bach—becoming, as it were, his "double"—Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt. Many more surprises are in store, which while combatting them, and even if they do not quite convince, compel attention. This contact of Busoni with the great masters is often "*une rencontre parfaite*," as perfect as the *quinte juste*, satisfying as the solution of a riddle, or the cypher of a cryptogram. Sometimes it is a dialogue, which is apparently in perfect accord; but it is infallibly the encounter of genius with genius. It would also be impossible for a physiognomist to be deceived. It is sufficient to shake his hand—the most beautiful that a sculptor ever imagined, a hand so robust and of appearance so frail—to discover in it an instrument rarer than the most perfect Stradivarius. It is enough to look at the noble and mobile face, the lofty brow, the decided eyes, the fine and sensitive nose, and the delicately chiselled lips, to grasp the fact that an exceptional being stands before us.

I shall try to justify these impressions which the least initiated listener will feel in regard to his playing as well as in regard to his personality, which is not only that of a pianist without an equal, but of an artist of rare persuasiveness and powerful originality, and who is as well one of the most representative artists of his time.

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Ferruccio Busoni was born at Empoli, in Tuscany, April 1st, 1866<sup>1</sup>, of an Italian father and of a mother whose origin on the paternal side was German; both were musicians. The father was a clarinet virtuoso and the mother an excellent pianist, and it was she who gave him his first musical instruction.

At four years of age, he could already play on the piano any melodies which had been played for him. When eight years

<sup>1</sup>In reference to Mr. Busoni, consult: H. Leichtentritt, "F. Busoni" (Breitkopf & Härtel); Lazare Ponnelle, "At Munich" (Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Ferruccio Busoni), Paris, Fischbacher, and Mr. Busoni's own work, "A New Esthetic of Music" and many others. The magazine articles are too numerous to mention. (Unquestionably that by H. Leichtentritt in the *Musical Quarterly*, is one of the best and most comprehensive. I am under the impression that it coincides with the same author's German pamphlet mentioned above.—Ed.)

old, he began to compose. His public début as a pianist also dates from this period, when the severe Viennese critic Edward Hanslick wrote a long and eulogistic article about him. Two years later, while at Graz, where he was studying, he directed a "Stabat Mater" of his own. When fifteen, on returning to Italy, the Royal Academy of Bologna opened its doors to him—as formerly to Mozart—with a charming speech, a fragment of which, as given to us by Mr. Ponnelle, follows:

Remember, young artist, that in this hall in which you have enthralled a distinguished audience . . . at a tender age the immortal Mozart presented his thesis and took the same degree in this Academy which you have now taken; may that serve to stimulate and strengthen you to persevere in a career which will lead you to fame.

As a reply to this encouragement, he wrote a cantata, "Il Sabato del Villaggio," developed after Leopardi. But these youthful honours could not persuade a young artist of his stamp, anxious for the highest attainment, to remain in Italy. He went first to Vienna, then to Leipzig, working equally hard at composition and virtuosity. His first concerts took place in Berlin in 1885, when he appeared both as pianist and composer, his "Variations sur un Prélude de Chopin" being on the programme: at first, however, he attracted little notice. Busoni only conquered the German capital little by little. I can also remember the empty places in the Salle Erard before the triumphal concerts of 1914 took place, when the notices read long in advance "All seats sold." A slow conquest, wherein lies the symbol of the artist's destiny, the artist who has a horror of *réclame* and to whom progress is law.

During his stay in Leipzig, he came in contact with such artists as Delius, Mahler, Tschaikowsky, and Grieg. He wrote his first string quartet and began with the Fugue in D major, the astonishing series of transcriptions of the organ works of J. S. Bach for the piano, which opened out a horizon until then unknown for this instrument, even to Liszt. As is well known, Leipzig at that time furnished music masters to the greater part of the world, and Busoni was called as professor to the Conservatory of Helsingfors. His sojourn in these northern countries, his marriage to a young Swedish lady in 1890, at Moscow, took him from his own country, but enriched his mind and feeling by adding new elements. Possibly these great countries, sparsely peopled, influenced him in proportion to their immensity.

It was at this period (1890), when the Rubinstein prize was awarded him, that his name first became universally known. In



Russia, he was brought in contact with Rimsky-Korsakow, Sazonov, and Glazounov. After a short exercise of his duties at the conservatory at Moscow, he was called to the New World, to be professor at the New England Conservatory at Boston 1891-1892, a position he soon relinquished in order to make a tour of the United States. He then went into voluntary retirement, in order to change completely his manner of playing. "It was at this period of my life," he writes, "that I became aware of such lacunae and of such faults in my playing that by an energetic resolve, I again took up the study of the piano from the beginning and upon an entirely new basis. Liszt's works were my guide." It was the retreat of Zarathoustra, and the pianist was not the only one to gain.

It was in Berlin, in 1894, that Busoni next established himself. Without wishing to be unjust, the situation Berlin offered to such a pianist cannot be compared with that which he would have had in London, or in Paris. The alarm sounded by Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, in 1886, in the preface of his "*Roman Russe*" should be born in mind, in order to acknowledge that the anxiety felt by this noble spirit at the failing influence of French thought on the thought of the world, would not have been less justified in 1890 in regard to music, any more than in regard to literature or philosophy. Paris in 1830 made a home for Chopin. Would Paris of 1890 have done so? In Berlin, Busoni did not confine himself to the piano and composition; he directed symphonic concerts of modern tendencies, where—it may be said—French art had a large share.<sup>1</sup> He always maintained complete independence and never made even the slightest concession to the highest official circles.<sup>2</sup> He varied his sojourn by tours and by seasons at Weimar, Bâle, and Vienna, where he endeavored to create centres of artistic instruction analogous to those which had been formed around Liszt at Weimar. In 1912, his first opera "*Die Brautwahl*" was played at Hamburg; it was but little understood by the public.

In reality Busoni cared so little about Germany that, in 1913, he accepted with joy the direction of the Liceo Musicale of Bologna, which Academy, it will be remembered, received him as it had the young Mozart. This position was not of long duration,

<sup>1</sup>Guy-Roparts, "*Pêcheurs d'Islande*;" Saint-Saëns, "*Ouverture des Barbares*;" d'Indy, prelude of the second act of "*L'Etranger*" and "*Suite française*;" Debussy, "*Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune*," and "*Nocturnes*;" Magnard, 3rd Symphony; César Franck, "*Les Djinns*," "*Le Chasseur maudit*," "*Prélude*," "*Chorale et fugue*," (orchestrated by G. Pierné).

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Busoni's only decoration apparently is the Legion of Honor.

however; a secondary Italian city did not offer a large or rich enough field for the talents and mind of Busoni. Then followed the great war, for which the artist felt an indescribable horror, even before his own country had entered into the struggle. He did not place himself "au-dessus de la mêlée;" he merely submitted to it and lived in Zurich, where circumstances imposed upon him a certain quietude like that in which, twenty years before, he had taken up the study of the piano again from the beginning—a quietude studious, profound—and even though the terms may seem contradictory—an active quietude. He assumed direction of the "Concerts d'abonnement," which he made eminently artistic and educational. He turned the "musique de scène" for the "Turandot" of Gozzi into a lyric drama, wrote "Arlecchino," a theatrical caprice in one act, and continued with the composition of "Doctor Faustus," as well as a "Sonatina" for Christmas 1917, etc.<sup>1</sup> His recent return to Paris was preceded by a triumphal tour in England, where not only the virtuoso was acclaimed, but where his compositions, though they met here and there with strong opposition, excited the attention of the most noteworthy critics, among them Edward J. Dent.<sup>2</sup>

From now on it is plainly to be seen that Ferruccio Busoni is not merely a marvelous virtuoso; in his art he is both philosopher and composer. Thus his career and his destiny offer more than one analogy with those of Liszt—with both of them the renown of the pianist preceded that of the composer, and far from being favorable to it, more or less obscured it. Equally bound to the works of the past and seeking to discover in them the roots of modern progress, for art a new horizon and unknown formulas, both are careful on its account to plant some new sign-posts upon the road of the future, both possessed of the curiosity of a world-wide intelligence, and armed for the conquest of ideas by the mastery of several languages, much world travel, and by long visits in nearly every civilized country. It is very probable that Busoni's temporary retirement from the concert-stage in his twenty-seventh year, when he sought to find the secrets of the pianoforte in the works of Liszt, has made this relationship more remarkable. But the resemblance, as will be seen, remains entirely extraneous, and I have brought it forward only to dissipate in advance any misunderstanding which might arise here from the superficial examination of entirely outward circumstances.

<sup>1</sup>See H. S. Salsberger, "Ferruccio Busoni" (in French) in the "Hunis-Musik-Jahrbuch."

<sup>2</sup>"Busoni and the Pianoforte" and "Busoni as Composer" by E. J. Dent in the "The Athaeneum" of October 34th and November 28th, 1919.

In studying Busoni's extremely rich and complex personality, the connection, so to speak, between the composer and the pianist is to be found in the little book he published under the title of "Entwurf einer neuen Aesthetik der Tonkunst."<sup>1</sup> It may be said that in this little book he has shown what are his theories, if no mind were not so free of theories as his, and no mind a greater stranger to all didactic prepossessions. This tiny book is a collection of aphorisms, where the want of a constructive dialectic does not exclude unity and grandeur of thought. I know nothing richer in literature for those who care to reflect upon the nature and meaning of music and upon the extent of its domain than this species of intellectual rhapsody. From the beginning Busoni does not disguise that the musical problem, such as he presents it, is not solvable, and in any case, the span of human life does not suffice in which to find the solution of the problem. Because, if music, more than any of the other arts, is of an immaterial essence, even more so than poetry, for words are rooted in reality, is it not on that account all the more impossible to grasp? Representation or description are not his affair, and Busoni keeps programme music apart from his ideal—here he separates himself from Liszt—to uphold absolute music. But here he meets with a contradiction and denounces it. Usage gives the name of pure or absolute music to formal music, whose forms are in reality an alteration of this purity, a negation of the absolute, a restriction of liberty. For Busoni it is a contradiction to exact from a composer liberty in all things except in form. These forms are at bottom a prejudice of taste, and taste is, according to Busoni, a limitation of feeling by the intelligence, a restraint upon the senses and it is taste which from music (*Musik*) has made the art of music (*Tonkunst*).<sup>2</sup>

In short, absolute, or pure music must be free. Far from its being necessary for no matter what musical motive to enter, cost what it may, into a predetermined form, every motive, as does the seed, contains within itself the principle and the rhythm of its development:

From the different plant-seeds grow different families of plants, dissimilar in form, foliage, blossom, fruit, growth, and colour. Each individual plant belonging to one and the same species assumes in size, form, and strength a growth peculiar to itself. So in each motive there lies the embryo of its fully developed form.

<sup>1</sup>English version, under the title of "A New Esthetic of Music, published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>"Entwurf einer neuen Aesthetik der Tonkunst, *passim*."

Thus Busoni wishes to liberate music from all material as well as intellectual ties, even at the theatre (since it is superfluous and contradictory to exact from sound the description of what one sees upon the stage). Musical writing itself is servitude, and in this his views touch those of Vincent d'Indy. Notation should be considered merely as a symbol:

Every notation is in itself the transcription of an abstract idea. The instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form<sup>1</sup>.

He goes almost so far as to say that there is no fixed text, that the sense varies from age to age, and that each generation has the right to adapt the sense to its own thought rather than be subservient to this or that one. "The letter kills, the spirit revives." The application of this principle to musical art is very daring, perhaps dangerous: but it explains on Busoni's part, the freedom of his transcriptions, as well as that which at times he does not hesitate to give to his interpretations.

The instruments, no less than the writing and notation, are an impediment to the free development of music:

The instruments are limited by their range, their timbre, the possibilities of execution, while their hundred chains bind the will of the creative artist.

Nor is it on all these material conditions that our tonal system depends, and after that our traditions of harmony:

These are still 'signs' and nothing else than what we to-day call the tonal system, an ingenious device to grasp somewhat of the eternal harmony; a meagre pocket edition of this encyclopaedic work; artificial light instead of the sun. Have you ever noticed how people gaze open-mouthed at the brilliant lighting of a hall? They never do so at the million-fold brighter sunshine of noonday.

According to him, all our tonalities come back to the two modes, major and minor; still further, he only sees in the second a "corruption" of the former (in which he is in accord with Maurice Emmanuel). Oh! Poor and mediocre "temperament" which has the restricted range of twenty-four scales! In the space of an octave, Busoni counts one hundred and thirteen possible scales. According to him, everything announces a near revolution in harmony. Tones and half tones do not suffice. Thirds of tones are wholly independent intervals of a pronounced character and not to be confounded with ill-tuned semitones. As one sees, it is not only musical form which is of concern to Busoni, but the matter itself. One is forced to think of the change which

<sup>1</sup>"Entwurf," etc., p. 19. The greatest freedom of music lies for him in the pause or the organ point. (p. 36).

the discovery of radioactivity, for example, has made in the conception of physical matter, which did not seem less firmly implanted in our minds than the temperament of the scales.

Busoni closes this hymn to the total and essential liberty of music by the appeal of Nietzsche for music liberated from all northern influence, German, European, for a music of the "Sun." He finds the description of his ideal in a phrase where Tolstoi, depicting a landscape on the borders of Lake Lucerne, rejoices to find "Neither in the lake, nor on the mountains, nor in the sky, a single straight line, a single unmixed color, a single point of repose; everywhere movement, irregularity, caprice, variety, an incessant interplay of shades and lines, and in it all the reposefulness, softness, harmony, and inevitableness of Beauty."

Must I say that these aphorisms of Ferruccio Busoni do not appear to me to be quite free from objections? I do not wish to traduce him by seeming to wish to hold him to the letter in his condemnation of programme music as well as of formal music. The living force which he makes of a creative tradition, renewing the works of the past from epoch to epoch, suffices to assure us that he does not disclaim any connection in the history of the arts. Programme music is, however, not wholly puerile, nor is all form in music pedantic. The first takes into account and makes use of all obscure connections, uncertain, slender, but manifest that nature has established between our different senses; she counts upon music to multiply or to determine these connections—is it to misdirect or to change them? Form in music, without doing violence to music, or to musical susceptibilities, endeavors to find a certain organic relation with the different qualities of the mind. I see there neither restriction nor limitation, but an effort to have music penetrate further into the intellectual life. From one end to the other, however, musical art is trying to find, in order to communicate the impressions of which it is the interpreter, a common ground to be compared to that which gives to the poet the use of language, to the sculptor the materialization of form, to the painter the reality of lines and colours. As this ground is by its nature very unstable, is it not more advantageous to consolidate it rather than to change it? I do not dare decide. Even the comparison which Busoni forms from the example of vegetable nature to claim in favour of the musical germ, which is the "motive" or "theme," a specific and individual liberty of development, equal to that of the seed, is perhaps more seductive than convincing. First, because science restrains these forms of development to a fairly restricted number of types where the

characteristics of family or of the individual have little place; lastly, because nature does not always bear fruit or multiply the different kinds, except through artificial cutting, grafting, and calculated selection.

One easily understands that this cult for the exuberance of nature and this faith in its spontaneity, animates an artist like Busoni; the difficulties, the materiality of the piano do not exist for him. He destroys them, suppresses them, volatilizes them. So quite naturally, he imagines music to be as obedient to the inspiration of the musician as the piano is to his fingers, and saturated as he is with science and civilization, he fears that this science and this civilization will throw us into a complete forgetfulness of life. This overthrow of "naturalism" is not unexampled, either in music or the other arts. It was after the slavish employment of geometric gardens *à la française* that we are taken by the beauty of the English parks, and we now see that the Americans, the people most given over to inveigling, domesticating, and enslaving scientifically and industrially the forces of nature, imagine that Paradise has been found again in the fantastic Yellowstone Park.

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I have said that the "New Esthetic of Music" would serve as a connecting link between pianist and composer. The works of the latter are considerable and extend in all directions. It would require a special study and a technical one to understand these transcriptions, notably those of the organ works of Bach, which are marvels of richness and invention. Let us, therefore, consider only his original compositions. Busoni has written for the theatre: "Die Brautwahl," "Arlecchino," and "Turandot;" for orchestra, "Poème Symphonique," "Suites," "Berceuse Élégaique," "Nocturne Symphonique," etc; for piano and orchestra, a Concerto with chorus and the "Fantasie Indienne;" for violin with orchestra or piano, one concerto and two sonatas; two string quartets; and lastly, a number of piano works<sup>1</sup>. Recently, two programmes of these works gave to the Parisian public merely an idea of their scope into which I shall not undertake to go definitely as I must confine myself to indications of a more vague and summary nature.

Is something of the executant to be found in the works of the composer? It does not seem doubtful to me. Not that Busoni's music is in the slightest degree the music of a "pianist."

<sup>1</sup>The catalogue of his works is in the op. cit. of H. Leichtentritt.

Those who have heard or read the Concerto, Op. 39 will realize that there is little resemblance between it and a concerto by Rubinstein. In Busoni's original works for the piano, or those in which the piano takes part, the boldness and ingenuity of the arrangements, as well as the many discoveries in sonority, recall and explain the author's mastery of the instrument. But far from supplementing or overweighing the music, they serve merely as a means. However, this is a small matter; in his compositions, as in his "Esthetic," Busoni is only a pianist in the measure that his virtuosity has obtained complete independence for him.

It is more especially in the aphorisms of his essay that the key is to be found to his musical works, which at first seem either strange or mysterious. Busoni is too sincere an artist, too great and too disdainful of immediate success, still more of an easy victory, for the character of his musical work not to correspond with his ideas upon art, and of which they are the outcome. These works are most daring and very moving, a statement which it is rather difficult to define. In his enthusiasm for research and invention, Busoni the composer is aided, as is Busoni the virtuoso, by a prodigious facility, by an exceptional gift of assimilation, and by a no less remarkable technic. In this respect his "Fantasia Contrapuntistica" for the piano, on the themes of Bach, and notably upon the unfinished "Kunst der Fuge," is for breadth of construction and richness of detail, a monument second to none in musical literature. In certain youthful works, such as the "Variations sur un Prélude de Chopin," academic influences are felt, which owe something to those of Brahms on a theme by Handel. This only means that in music Busoni knows all and can do all. He is able to dispense with new proofs at every turn and is free to obey his own fantasy.

This last is many sided, changing, capricious, if you will. With him, artistic creation is a perpetual quest; none of his works are cast in the same mold, nor have they any resemblance to one another; presumably, he has a horror of fixing any formula in order to exploit it afterwards. No sooner had he finished the "caprice théâtral" of the ironical and fantastic "Arlecchino" than he turned to work on "Doctor Faustus," changing from Italian "malice" to the profundity, the "Gründlichkeit," of Germany. The somewhat unusual esoteric character of the humor of "Die Brautwahl" seems to have confused the public; "Turandot" follows next and seeks for effects through an esoteric atmosphere rather than through colour. Grandeur, intelligence, verve, reflection, vigor, nonchalance, wit, gravity, action, and meditation

follow each other according to a fancy in which the critics of the future will have some difficulty in finding a line to follow, in order to show a predetermined evolution.

It often happens that these diverse tendencies, not content with appearing here and there, meet in one and the same work. For example, nothing is more dissimilar than the "Fantasie Indienne" for piano and orchestra from the Concerto, op. 39. But even in the latter concerto, where the total development attains a majestic breadth, how many different phases, how many different nuances, from the most thoughtful melancholy to the most overflowing exuberance! A sort of tarantella goes through it, and it is brought to its conclusion sustained by a chorus singing of Nirvana from the verses of Oehlenschlaeger. It cannot be doubted that a man who foresees and who predicts and who wishes to substitute for the twenty-four scales of our temperament one hundred and thirteen scales, semitones and tripartite tones, would not draw back from any boldness in writing, provided that, above all, his harmonies should be rich and sonorous.

It goes without saying, also, that this mobility of ideas attempts an always variable realization, which makes these works hardly accessible to the public and little fitted for an immediate success. Experience opposes them, in a certain way, with the same objections that can be brought against his "New Esthetic of Music." The public wants to know what it is listening to; and to be understood an artist must repeat himself. I do not believe, however, that Busoni would ever make this concession. If I may be permitted to refer to private letters, I find that he pictures artistic activity as a film. But this ephemeral fluidity of forms, disappearing as soon as outlined, makes them rather difficult to grasp. The public, even the most enlightened, is wrong in withholding recognition from an artist, until he has made a specialty and created a formula which they will be certain to find again later on; perhaps genius implies, in a certain measure, that sort of fixity which is desired by those to whom it appeals. Does Busoni always submit to what the conditions of artistic life ask of him? I am unable to answer, for there is too great nobility in his ardor and in his independence to attach blame to him for a fault as though it were a weakness.

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The other day, as, pencil in hand, I was reading Busoni's essay, I instinctively wrote down the name of Euphorion,



imaginary son of Faust and Helen, in regard to a phrase where the author, citing the youthfulness of music, compares it with a child who cannot walk, but floats: "It touches not the earth with its feet. It knows no law of gravitation. It is well-nigh incorporeal; its material is transparent. It is sonorous air. It is almost nature herself. It is—free." Two pages further on, I saw without surprise that Busoni himself quoted some verses from "Faust," taken from the episode of Euphorion, whose heavy and useless clothing was found upon the earth after the ascension from which he never returned. There is something of Euphorion in Busoni's art; does he not recall the son of Faust and Helen, himself the product of a southern land and germanic thought?

As long as Busoni applies his art to the interpretation of known works by means of such a familiar instrument as the piano, the contact in which these works and this instrument keep us in touch with reality, reassures us and prevents a fall from vertiginous heights. He even gives us a point of departure to measure these heights whither he leads us, so that, instead of going astray, we are exalted; we follow him in an ecstasy which nothing can disturb, into ethereal regions, yet where we do not altogether lose sight of our earthly dwelling. But when he cuts the rope attached to the balloon, when he leads us without map or itinerary, expecting us to follow the daring flights of his imagination, we are encumbered and embarrassed by our feet of clay; or, on the contrary, perhaps annoyed by being made aware of their weight. For a Maurice Barrès<sup>1</sup>, the true beauty of a landscape is to be found in the pure quality of the Italian light rather than in the irregular profiles of the Swiss mountains, which bring the romantic barriers too near our eyes. I believe that Busoni would prefer the immense pile of the Rigi or the Wetterhorn to the landscape of line and fugitive shading formed by clouds on a blue sky. Paradoxical to-day—true tomorrow—who knows? Perhaps in the future, by substituting aerial for funicular communication with inaccessible heights to which an organ point might possibly bear the same relation to the summit, as the Terminal to the Palace, we may modify our esthetics as well as our ideas of touring. Man never becomes used to the inaccessible; he wants it, but is afraid of it; he does not like it until it has ceased to be inaccessible. When the aerial cars appear on the skyline according to schedule time, these unknown countries of the sun and of the sky will alone appeal to our taste or capture our emotions. Music, such as Busoni conceives it, as he realizes it in his playing, as he wishes

<sup>1</sup>"Du Sang, de la Volupté, et de la Mort." New Edition, p. 216.

to create it in his works, will correspond to the rapturous flight of those beating wings which we have followed for ten years, gaining each day in breadth and actuality; so it is not without justice that Busoni has observed an analagous process in music, of which he, since 1906,<sup>1</sup> has taken cognizance and in which he may well say he has participated.

In everything, in art as in the rest, the certainties of the future are made from the anxieties of the present. The peculiar quality of genius is to show us new things while we are still struggling with the old problems. Would it astonish us that this uncertainty which expresses itself in musical sounds to-day, should sing of certainties tomorrow? Will the "echo sonore" of which Victor Hugo speaks, no longer sound only in the poet's soul, but in the musician's? Are we not at the beginning of an epoch when the worn muscles, the tired mind of humanity, weary of searching the principles of action in systems, for hope in science, mystery in philosophy, or symbols in poetry will try to free itself even as in dreams? Detached from all materialism and, as Busoni would like, from all form, music, through its spontaneity and its unlimited possibilities, will produce that fusion between impression and expression, music, which puts no limit upon emotion or upon expression, would then be the eloquent and universal voice to express this weariness and these aspirations. Free and varied work, always interesting, though sometimes uncertain like that of Ferruccio Busoni's, a sort of cosmic interpretation following his colossal fantasy at will, has perhaps already done more than realize this prophecy. So I have wished not only to point out a virtuoso without equal, not only a composer of highest originality, but a leader of thought, and, as I have said in the beginning, by the quality of his playing, of his genius, and of his mind, one of the most significant men of a time which has seen a pianist become a prime minister. Then why should we be astonished to find in another pianist a rhapsodist who brings out in turn every daring though often uncertain combination, now verging towards the light, now walking in obscurity, and whose work is forced into being through the suffering of his own epoch, even as the varied notes of a perhaps prophetic melopœia?

(Translated by Harriet Lanier from the "*Revue hebdomadaire*," April, 1920.)

<sup>1</sup>"Entwurf," etc., p. 39, note.

# PLAIN CHANT, THE HANDMAID OF THE LITURGY: A CHALLENGE AND A PROPHECY

By F. JOSEPH KELLY

**C**HRISTIANITY has sanctified the arts and made them serve the purpose for which her Divine Founder intended her here upon earth, namely the salvation of souls. Chief among the arts which she has used for this noble purpose, are painting, sculpture, architecture and music. These are really and truly religious arts, for they enter into the very life of the Church. Some among these arts appeal to the eye, and thereby influence the soul of man for good. They are necessary for the proper observance of the Liturgy, yet they do not form an integral part of it. There is but one art that can be said to form an essential part of liturgical service, an art which constitutes the solemnity of that service, and that art is none other than the divine art of music.

Music as a religious art finds its sublimest expression in what is known as Plain Chant. The position of Plain Chant, historically and liturgically considered, is a unique one. In fact, it has a place among the different styles of music, which is entirely its own. Its style is so different from all other styles of music, that it may not be compared with them, and therefore has no competitor. On the other hand, Plain Chant is the basis of all other forms of church music, polyphonic, choral, as well as the more ornate forms. It breathes a never failing life in every note, so that its vitality remains ever strong, and in this sense, it can never become archaic or antiquated. Like the Liturgy of the Church, the oftener we hear and witness it, the more indeed of beauty and sublimity we discover in it. It is happily called the "Handmaid of the Liturgy," for together with the Liturgy, they are the vehicle by which the sublime truths of Christianity are impressed upon us.

When Pope Pius X issued his now famous *Motu Proprio* on Church Music on that memorable St. Cecilia's Day, 1903, he made the Catholic world forever his debtor, by restoring to Catholic worship Plain Chant, otherwise known as Gregorian Chant, in its purity and its supreme importance for liturgical worship. No longer would any one who calls himself a Catholic church

organist or choir-master dare to pride himself on his ignorance of the Chant and its governing principles. On the contrary, to-day his musical scholarship is measured by his knowledge and appreciation of the Chant of his Church.

As a rule, not only the layman, but also organists and singers have little or no conception of Plain Chant, its spirit or its tonality. Is it any wonder then, that it is often considered by them barbaric, antiquated music, unworthy of any consideration or study? To appreciate Plain Chant as it deserves, time and study are required for its mastery. The educated church musician, then, will not fail to give the Chant the honored place it deserves in the domain of music. The spirit, the rhythm, and the tonality of the Chant are so far removed from that of modern music, that it forms a department in the art of music entirely distinct. The true student of the Chant becomes an ardent lover of it. He sees and hears in it, music breathing real sanctity and purity. He does not make the egregious blunder of comparing the Chant with modern music. There is no standard of comparison, since they differ as to rhythm and tonality, and as to the end for which they have their being.

Let us examine some of the reasons for the attitude of mind of those who prefer figured music to the liturgical chant. Is it true that Plain Chant is not artistic, that it requires no study, that the simplicity of its melodies requires nothing more than a slight reading knowledge of intervals? To one who has made a deep study of the Chant, and has thereby learned to love it, three qualifications seem to assert themselves for its proper rendition, namely, art, genius, and a mind sanctified by prayer and meditation. The absence of any one of these three qualifications militates against the proper rendition of the Chant. A musician may make a study of the Chant, he may have the art and genius to render it as it is written, but if the third qualification is not present, that rendition will be cold and worldly. We often hear such renditions of the Chant, renditions that make worshippers despise it.

Plain Chant is inspired music from heaven. Therefore, only when it is rendered by those whose hearts and minds are imbued with religious feelings, can its full meaning and beauty be reflected. Of the three qualifications considered, the third, namely a sanctified mind and heart, may least be dispensed with. Some choirs render the Chant very artistically, but lacking the third qualification, it is a body without a spirit. Plain Chant is a prayer, and therefore must possess that which makes prayer a communing with God. Right here we have the secret of the failure of so many choirs in attempting to sing Plain Chant. To repeat, the evident result of

this failure is to disgust, not only the singers, but the hearers as well.

The very simplicity of Plain Chant is its rarest quality. It is not true that simplicity excludes the artistic. The object of Plain Chant is not that of modern music, namely to delight the ear, but to provide a vehicle for the words of the Liturgy, transporting the mind and heart to God. Both in rhythm and in melody it conforms to the natural speaking voice, so that it becomes the medium of the greatest expressive power. It is the prose of music. Figured music with its regular time bars is no more expressive and no more natural, than the use of poetry would be in our every day conversation. In spite of all the opposition to Plain Chant melody, with its free rhythm, it is the only natural music that we possess to-day. What prose is to literature, the Chant is to music, and figured music bears the same relation to the art of music, as poetry does to literature. So in the last analysis, the Chant expresses our ideas in a natural way, as prose composition, while figured music expresses them in an artificial way, as poetry.

It has been argued, that since modern music can be reduced to time measures, it is an improvement on the Chant. Quite the contrary is true. Modern music is the slave of a regular rhythm, following certain artificial laws, and never deviating from that rhythm. The Chant, on the contrary, expresses the meaning of the words in a free rhythm, conforming itself to the words, instead of compelling the words to conform themselves to it. Because the Chant has no time measures, it cannot be said that it has no rhythm. Plain Chant, it is true, has no "bars" or measures, but these do not constitute that ethereal something that we call rhythm. Chant melody has a very decided rhythm, and it is only with the proper understanding of this rhythm, that it can be rendered correctly. Indeed, the subject of Plain Chant rhythm is almost inexhaustible, but the main attribute is that Plain Chant melody has the rhythm of prose composition, as modern music has the rhythm of poetry. It is this free rhythm of the Chant, that eliminates that useless repetition of the words of the Liturgy, which becomes necessary when these words are set to modern music.

In the rendition of Plain Chant, this one principle must always be kept in mind: the Chant was written to bring out and to express the meaning of the words exactly, and therefore must be sung accordingly. It is the very voice of the Liturgy, a voice that speaks as eloquently to men, as it did centuries before the advent of modern figured music. It is inseparably wedded to the words of the Liturgy, unfolding the full meaning of the texts, and expressing

that which the mere spoken word is unable to express, aspiration, tenderness, grief for the sorrows of this world, hope for the life of the world to come. Its entire spirit is elevating and holy, drawing the mind and heart to God. These rare qualities make the Chant wonderfully adapted to liturgical service, and, on the other hand, these same qualities make it entirely out of place everywhere but in the sacred precincts of the Church.

The simply truth is, that Plain Chant and modern figured music are widely separated. Each has its own characteristics and its own particular aim. To compare them, is like comparing two entirely different arts, as for example, architecture and painting. They have hardly any point in common. They are absolutely distinct and cannot be judged by the same standards. Plain Chant has no place where modern figured music is at home, and vice versa. How incongruous, then, is the practice indulged in by certain prominent organists and choir-masters, of singing part of a liturgical service in Plain Chant and part in the most florid modern figured music. This practice places both kinds of music at a very great disadvantage. It is like trying to mix oil and water. Is it any wonder that the Chant is in disrepute among people? Modern music appeals to the emotions, whereas the object of the Chant is to produce that indescribable something called unction, to raise the heart and mind to that which is elevating and purifying. The result intended to be produced by each is as wide apart as the poles. All attempts then, to compare or to associate modern music with Plain Chant melody, should be abandoned. They are two different arts in every particular, having nothing in common except pitch and tone. In rhythm, tonality, spirit and aim, they differ as night from day.

Though the Church's insistence on the singing of the Chant at her services is a reasonable one, still there are some who question her right to demand it. Some musicians regard this insistence as a narrow policy on the part of the Church, and therefore spare no efforts to discourage the reform in church music, a reform so earnestly desired by the authorities of liturgical churches. They argue that the singing is something distinct from the liturgical services. Until they realize that singing forms an integral part of liturgical service, they will continue in this state of mind. Because of its ready adaptation to liturgical use, the Church is most solicitous that the Chant be revived in its original, undefiled purity. The Church appropriates to herself all that assists her in her work for the salvation of souls, and eliminates anything that would in the least hinder that work. The qualities of sanctity and

goodness of form which are characteristic of the Liturgy demand that the music that accompanies that Liturgy possess the same qualities. We deny that our modern church music possesses these qualities. Plain Chant alone possesses these qualities in the very highest degree. Its form, its character, its genius, its effect on the hearer, all breathe heavenly calm and angelic purity. Therefore, whereas the Church by no means eliminates all other music from her services, she insists that the Chant is the best suited for her purpose and her work, as "Handmaid of the Liturgy," written expressly for the Liturgy and as entirely out of place unless accompanied by the Liturgy.

Hence the restoration of the Chant is not a step backward. On the contrary, this restoration means progress. If for no other reason, the Chant should be restored to demonstrate the unity of the teaching of Christianity, and her survival through the centuries. It was through the monks of the Middle Ages that music became an independent art. As architecture, painting and the other arts reached the zenith of their glory during those ages of faith, so music, in its highest and most glorious form, namely the Chant, was at the very zenith of its glory. The beautiful sacred melodies of the Chant were the result of the zeal and enthusiasm of the monks, coupled with their great holiness of life. Modern figured music on the other hand has progressed under secular influences and came into being as a result of secular needs. There can be no just comparison between music nurtured under ecclesiastical influences, as the Chant, and our modern music which is secular in character, spirit and genius.

Plain Chant in its early history was transmitted from age to age by oral tradition only, until the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, when the first schools of singing were established. Boys were admitted in these schools and the primitive melodies were taught them without manuscript. But oral tradition, at best, is uncertain, and as a result we have many different opinions to-day, as to the proper rendition of the Chant. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was the first to attempt to reduce the melodies to a definite system, and we are no doubt indebted to him for the four "authentic modes," and the practice of antiphonal singing. Two hundred years afterwards, Gregory the Great, collected and revised the Ambrosian melodies and added his own compositions in what is known as the celebrated "Antiphonarium." To this great work of Gregory, we must attribute more than to any other circumstance, the preservation of Plain Chant melodies from corruption. Gregory the Great also introduced the four "plagal

modes," which perfect the whole system of Plain Chant. His "Antiphonarium" became the authority to which all other liturgical books must of necessity be conformed. From that time on until the present, corruptions of one kind or another have crept into the Chant, and at the beginning of this century a movement was inaugurated to bring the Chant back to its pristine purity and glory.

The foundation of all art-music of the Middle Ages was Plain Chant, and the science of music borrowed from the Chant melodies in its development. Music was never considered apart from the Liturgy of the Church to which it was wedded. Until the fourteenth century, composers as such, were unknown. Choirs were the training schools for composers and choir-masters, so that almost without exception, composers and choir-masters were graduated from the choirs in which they received their training and experience as choristers. We should follow the same mode of procedure in these our days. It is in a well drilled liturgical choir, that the chorister is able to imbibe the spirit of the Chant and to make a thorough study of it. Plain Chant literature is so extensive, that it would require more than a span of one man's life to make even a slight study of it. The authorized collection of Plain Chant works numbers over six hundred and thirty different compositions. Moreover, the "Hours of Divine Service" contain two thousand antiphons, and eight hundred greater responses. Besides, there is the immense collection of Ambrosian music, the contemporary of Gregorian music. The serious student of the Chant has a vast literature that he is privileged to peruse and study.

This treasury of Church music, has lately been restored to us by the famous "Motu Proprio" of Pius X, after the monks of Solesmes Abbey, for almost a century in the quiet of their cells and in extensive travel, had been delving into the treasures of Plain Chant, patiently and indefatigably examining the ancient manuscripts, and comparing them with the most advanced paleographic technique, and incidentally employing the art of photography for their scholarly purposes on a scale so vast as probably to have been unprecedented. In the history of science there is no more fascinating and impressive chapter than this idealistic enterprise of the Benedictines of Solesmes, to separate the genuine from the counterfeit and to revive the true interpretation intended by composers of more than a thousand years ago.

Students of Plain Chant will be forever indebted to these good monks to whose energy, scholarship and piety we owe the colossal "Paléographie Musicale," the direct result of which has



been that other monumental work, the Vatican Edition of Gregorian Chant books, thus bringing to public view the sublime treasures of Plain Chant. If at some future date, Plain Chant again becomes the universal music of the Church, the long-sought-for ideal, will be due to the labors of these monks. The priceless treasures uncovered by them are attracting students of church music the world over. As their ranks increase, a true knowledge and an intelligent love of Plain Chant will spread. Prejudice, ignorance and contempt will gradually disappear and the time may yet come, perhaps sooner than the scoffers realize, when again Plain Chant will be taught and loved in every parish throughout the Christian world, not as music forbiddingly archaic, but as music of everlastingly vital beauty and spiritual appeal.

# THE GENERAL TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY BELGIAN MUSIC

By CHARLES VAN DEN BORREN

**A** FIRST premise must be stated in any attempt to develop the characteristic trends or tendencies in contemporary Belgian music: it is that since the death of Guillaume Lekeu (1894), no artist worthy of being placed beside this master has appeared on Belgian soil. The nineteenth century had produced the *Liègeois* César Franck (1822-1890), whose lofty genius is to-day universally recognized; the Flamand, Peter Benoît (1834-1901), the founder of the modern Flemish school, a composer of great merit, whose racial originality cannot be contested, although he may be reproached with a certain lack of depth and refinement; and Guillaume Lekeu, of Verviers, (1870-1894), whose sonata for violin and piano, *Adagio* for string orchestra, and unfinished Quartet testify to so marked a personality that we are not going too far in supposing he would have been one of the greatest masters of our times, if death had not prematurely carried him off.

That the absence of such masters is the cause of Belgium's musical inferiority in this twentieth century cannot well be denied. And yet the fact has not prevented Belgium from continuing to be, as it has been, a focus for the most intense musical activity. More than this: there can be no doubt that, aside from the question of "genius," this activity shows itself under aspects which, in their entirety, denote a high general level of esthetic elevation, when compared to that of the preceding period. From 1830 to 1880, approximately, the Belgian artists—with the exception of the painters—were guilty, in general, of that form of provincialism which consists in adopting the fashions of a larger and more important neighboring country, long years after these fashions themselves have given place to others in their land of origin.

Thus, before the time of Charles Decoster, Emile Verhaeren and Maurice Maeterlinck, Belgium, from the standpoint of letters, was altogether tributary to France. As regards the art of music, Paris and Leipsic were the two lighthouses toward which all eyes turned, and one of Peter Benoît's most meritorious acts was precisely his breaking away from this dependence in order to create

a specifically Flemish music, largely based on the folk-song of his natal soil. As to César Franck, we know that while still very young he lost all touch with his homeland, and that, in reality, he owed the bulk of his musical development to French sources. Nor should we forget how this "provincial," little by little, began to tower in the land of his adoption, and that it was not long before he himself was teaching his erstwhile masters the art of self-examination, and renunciation of the vulgar and superficial esthetics of the time of Louis-Philippe and the Second Empire.

Also long the guest of France, Lekeu profited largely by these lessons. It was because he was able to rise with all the vigor of his admirable artistic temperament against an imitative "provincialism," that he has conquered, in the choir of modern musicians, that eminent place of which his country is so proud to-day.

That the spirit of provincialism has entirely departed from Belgium since the death of Lekeu is something which we will not for an instant claim. The fact is, that this phenomenon is one which is not uniquely observable in any one particular country, but which is common to all—and they are numerous—in which fashion rules. Only, we must remember that there are degrees in this respect, and it cannot be gainsayed that the Belgian provincialism of 1910 no longer is marked by the narrow and trifling character it showed in 1880. The quasi reflex invitation mechanically extended by the most rapidly and easily gained successes in a neighboring land, has made for a more serious and conscientious discipline, by virtue of which an art ideal is followed quite irrespective of any considerations of immediate interest. The models taken are no longer the money successes of the big noise-makers in Paris, but the great art-works of the great masters of all lands, first among them Richard Wagner, César Franck, Guillaume Lekeu, Claude Debussy. On the other hand, instead of confining their admiration exclusively to a certain given period or school, the Belgian composers do not neglect, on occasion, to search for inspiration in the past, and to adapt to the spirit of the times the musical concepts of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and more modern periods. The Belgian musician, formerly ignorant and uncultured by preference, has, little by little, begun to understand that he cannot climb the lofty summits of art unless he enlarges his intellectual and esthetic horizons. Hence, more and more, he has undertaken to educate himself, reading the works which popularize musical history and the questions occurring in connection with it. In this way he is gaining an increasing amount

of perfection, which makes it possible for him to avoid the grosser manifestations of poor taste to which his absolute ignorance of all that did not pertain strictly to the technical side of his art formerly exposed him.

This trend toward progress arises out of two currents in appearance contradictory, but in reality leading to the same end: one of these currents is that of the propaganda carried on in favor of the great art-works of the past, with which he had grown entirely out of touch during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century; the other is that of the persistent encouragement of new trends and tendencies, and the reaction against the spirit of doubt and denial which, in so far as music is concerned, recognizes only a certain school, narrowly limited to a certain period and to a hard-and-fast esthetic concept.

The return to the past was, in the main, affected by the personal action of that great musical historian F. A. Gevaert (1828-1908), during his life-time director of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, and to whom were due the admirable concerts given of the principal works of Gluck, Handel and J. S. Bach, which were incontrovertible revelations to Belgian artists and music-lovers at the close of the nineteenth century, and had a quite incalculable influence from the point of view of the formation of taste and esthetic orientation of the younger generation. After the beginning of the twentieth century, this movement was accentuated, on the one hand, by the organization of concerts of the same kind, more and more frequently given; on the other, by the progressive endowment of chairs of musical history in the Belgian universities and conservatories. The liking for the older music was increased until it extended to the precursors of J. S. Bach (Schütz, Carissimi, etc.), to the great Italian monodists (Monteverdi, etc.), and to the composers of the marvellous Franco-Netherland school of polyphonic music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It even resurrected the works of the *trouvères* and troubadours of the Middle Ages. It would be impossible to estimate the extent to which these new perspectives opened the eyes of the Belgian artists, and the degree to which they aided in lending nobility to their ideals.

The current of modernism made itself felt, in the beginning, by the campaign undertaken on behalf of the works of Wagner, a campaign set in motion by a small group of *dilettanti*, immediately after the inauguration of the Bayreuth Theatre in 1876. This campaign was entirely successful, and within a short space of time Belgium had become a glowing centre of expansion for the

gigantic conceptions of the great musical revolutionary.<sup>1</sup> Maurice Kufferath was the greatest apostle of Wagnerism in Belgium (1852-1919). He was the author of a whole series of books on the various works of the master of Bayreuth, which have become classics. Under the impulsion given by him, the success of the latter's music grew in increasing measure, and the numerous Wagnerian performances at the Brussels Theatre, from 1880 to 1914, witness to the enthusiasm with which the Belgian public received such scores as the *Ring*, *Tristan*, *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*.<sup>2</sup>

This preference for Wagner was carried somewhat to excess, however, and it cannot be doubted that the immeasurable predilection accorded his music in Belgium by an important section of the music-loving public contributed not a little to relegate to obscurity dramatic works which—for all they were more modest—nevertheless merited a better fate.

Be this as it may, this predilection had its good as well as its bad side; especially where it was not purely a result of snobbery. From 1880 to 1900, above all, Wagner's lyric dramas struck many a young musician who first made their acquaintance like a genuine thunderbolt, after the spectacular and artificial display of "grand opera" in general. To these it came as the deep and grandiose expression of an estheticism young and freshly vigorous, of a radiant ideal, which had issued from the artist's brain to speak to their own hearts, to embody their most intimate aspirations.

On the other hand a movement had outlined itself, during the last years of the nineteenth century, in favor of innovation and the "young French school." Under the direction of Octave Mans (1856-1919), an enlightened Mæcenat who, himself, had been one of the earliest worshippers at the Bayreuth shrine, expositions of painting and sculpture, concerts, and artistic conferences were organized, in which one could follow out the most recent development of the plastic arts and the esthetics of literature and music. The concerts of the "Twenty-two" and of the *Libre Esthétique*, which succeeded them until 1914, will remain, in the memory of those who were privileged to attend them, artistic

<sup>1</sup>See Edmond Evenepoel's excellent work: *Le Wagnerism hors d'Allemagne (Bruxelles et la Belgique)*, Paris, Fischbacher, 1891.

<sup>2</sup>This enthusiasm did not survive the outbreak of the war. After the conclusion of the latter, however, one section of public opinion, in a spirit which we do not hesitate to qualify as narrowly fanatic, opposed the performance of any work by Wagner in concert or on the stage. A Socialist society alone risked a public performance, during June, 1920, of portions of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, without any further resulting incident than the condemnatory comments of a part of the press.

events of the very first order, at which in turn, there were revealed the most striking works of César Franck, Gabriel Fauré, Vincent d'Indy, Chausson, Duparc, de Bréville, Lekeu, Ravel, Debussy, etc. The weekly, *L'Art moderne*, edited by Octave Mans, was the official monitor of this moment, which led the van of artistic progress. It never deviated from its lofty line of policy once laid down, and in it one finds, as a whole, a faithful echo of all the events of the greatest esthetic development which took place in Belgium in the course of the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first two of the twentieth century.

It must be said, in praise of the Belgian public, or rather, to be more exact, in praise of that more select body whose interest in art amounted to a passion, that they accepted with great good will and tolerance the "novelties" which more advanced spirits endeavored to impose on them. There was resistance, of course, but the exception of a few blind reactionaries, whose narrow perceptions, in fact, were inimical to all esthetic sensibility, had no real influence save on that fraction of the public, but slightly interested, which can see only that which tradition has hallowed, or only enjoys the charm of the commonplace. The finer spirits, on the other hand, were strangely moved by many of these "unedited" accents, and far from committing themselves stupidly, sincerely admitted what there might be of the human and eternally beautiful to be found in them. This mental attitude explains why, at the *Théâtre de la Monnaie*, at Brussels, could be given first performances of a number of dramatic works of far-reaching importance, which Paris had refused to introduce: notably Chabrier's *Gwendoline* (1886), Vincent d'Indy's *Fervaal* (1897), Chausson's *Le Roi Arthur* (1903), Pierre de Bréville's *Eros vainqueur* (1910). . . .

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It is in the ambient which we have just described that the younger generations of Belgian musicians have been formed. And it is certain that at the present moment these generations are harvesting the fruits of this more liberal system of instruction, are profiting by these broad prospectives opening on distant horizons.

The Flemish school of Peter Benoit, it is true, has not yielded all that might have been expected of it. It died out, to speak more exactly, with Jan Blockx (1851-1912), Benoit's successor as director of the Flemish Conservatory of Anvers, and the composer

of the popular lyric dramas: *Herbergorinses*,<sup>1</sup> 1897; *De Bruid der Zee*,<sup>2</sup> 1901, etc., based on excellent librettos, but musically superficial enough, and making a sort of pattern impression after the noble effusions of the head of the same school. Gustave Huberti (1843-1910) who, though a Walloon, had ranged himself in his youth beneath the banner of the Flemish school, retraced his steps toward the end of his career, and began to write songs whose accents were altogether novel, songs directly inspired by the younger French school. As to Edgar Tinel, (1854-1912), Flemish born, he seems to have been but very slightly influenced by the doctrine of Peter Benoit, and his art, impregnated with feeling exceedingly warm and sincere, borrows its language, by preference, from Mendelssohn, from Schumann, from the Wagner of *Lohengrin*, and the Liszt of *St. Elizabeth*. His oratorio *St. Franciscus*, his operas *Godelieve* and *Katherina* (1909), breathe forth a purely romantic atmosphere, colored by a tendency toward musical eclecticism, and at certain moments, by classic touches in the Handelian manner. A pupil of Tinel, the *Brugois* Joseph Ryelandt (b. 1870), strives to realize a more elaborate ideal, and, though endowed with a lesser measure of inspiration, achieves in oratorio form (*De Komst des Heeren*,<sup>3</sup> Op. 45; *Maria*, Op. 48, etc.), works purer in style and more unified in inspiration. Brahms, César Franck, Elgar, turn and turn about, captivate and influence him. Seconded by literary collaborators of exceptional merit, he has undoubtedly contributed to raise the level of contemporary oratorio. His chamber-music and his piano compositions display the same qualities of good taste and lofty property. He is, to sum up, one of those who, though they cannot create a new and original musical idiom, nevertheless manage to give their works the breath of personal sensibility.

The present director of the Brussels Conservatory, M. Léon Du Bois (b. 1859), is theoretically a follower of the Flemish school. But his art—as he himself admits—is impenetrated with Wagnerism to such a degree that any practical relation on his part with the tradition of Peter Benoit is out of the question. A sign of the times is the fact that his two principle works, the mimodrama *Le Mort*, and the lyric drama *Eden*, are both inspired, in the literary sense, by one of those writers who, without having the importance of a Verhaeren or a Maeterlinck, nevertheless played a leading part in the renaissance of Belgian letters toward the

<sup>1</sup>Princesse d'Auberge.

<sup>2</sup>La Fiancée de la Mer.

<sup>3</sup>L'Avènement du Seigneur.

end of the nineteenth century: Camille Lemonnier. The music of Du Bois wins us by reason of its composer's perfect technical understanding of his art, a fine continuity of lyric development, and a wealth of instrumental color which may unquestionably be attributed to his Flemish ancestry.

Another Flamand is M. Paul Gilson (b. 1865), whose output, already considerable, shows him to be an exceptionally gifted musician, with a consummate scientific knowledge of counterpoint and the orchestra, and an uncommon assimilative faculty.

His first important work, the symphonic poem *La Mer* (1892), created a sensation at its initial performance. Our present perspective discloses certain points in common with the Russians (Borodine, Glazounow), which escaped attention twenty-five years ago and which, without at all taking away from the intrinsic value of the composition, none the less prove those qualities of fundamental originality which were ascribed to him at the time to have been illusory. The fact remains that about 1890 a young musician, of humble origin, had the audacity to draw inspiration from a strange art, one hardly known in Belgium, and to make use of its characteristics in a musical form—the symphonic poem—which, up to the time mentioned, had not as yet received the Belgian franchise.

Since then, M. Gilson has produced a goodly number of works which are material evidence that his is an individuality fertile in resources of every kind, by no means without poetic feeling, and supported at one and the same time by lofty culture and a savage craving for independence. There are, for instance, cantatas and symphonies of an official nature, which rise far above the general level of compositions of the kind. There is an oratorio: *Francesca da Rimini*, 1895, and the lyric dramas: *Prinses Zonneschyn*,<sup>1</sup> 1903; and *Zeevolk*,<sup>2</sup> somewhat massive in their musical substance, and very Wagnerian; but having sustained interest, and developed in such fashion that the rules of good taste are never broken. There is a whole series of movements for fanfare, ideally conceived for the brasses, and on a superior esthetic level, etc.

To all practical purposes a contemporary of M. Gilson, M. Auguste de Boeck has not his colleagues's endowment of musical solidity and science. His impulsive temperament delivers him up, more or less, to the hazards of his inspirations, which are often happy; yet which, in most cases, would benefit by the application of self-criticism. M. de Boeck is one of those natures

<sup>1</sup>*Princesse Rayon de Soleil.*

<sup>2</sup>*Gens de Mer.*



at once expansive and richly gifted, whom an excessive thirst for independence pushes into a sort of savage eclecticism but little suited to the development of good taste, and to the blossoming forth of perfected works of art.

He relies too much on his facility, and is too easily contented with his first effort. Yet it must be acknowledged as well that he has his happy moments, and that when these occur he, more convincingly than many another, impresses us with his vitality and spontaneity. It is for this reason that he has composed, before all, for the stage, and his lyric dramas *De Dwerger*,<sup>1</sup> *Thé-roigne de Méricout*, *Een Winternachtsdroom*,<sup>2</sup> *Reinart de Vos* (1909), undeniably make up the most characteristic part of his output. Humor, the picturesque, color lavishly spread, are outstanding features of his music, and witness to those racial qualities which are common to him and to the land of Til Uylenspiegel, Jordaens and Teniers.

We must still mention, among the Flemish composers of the present day, M. Louis Mortelmans (b. 1868), who is, without contradiction, one of the most sympathetic among the composers of second rank by reason of his good taste, his distinction, and his noble sincerity. There are melodies of his, notably those which he has set to verses by the great Flemish poet Guido Gezelle, which take rank among the best that have been produced in the Flemish provinces of Belgium during the past twenty or thirty years.

The Flamand is a melodist by inclination. No better proof to the fact may be cited than the periodical publication known as *Het Vlaamsche Lied* (Flemish Song), which for twelve years antedating the war appeared regularly, edited by M. Arthur Wilford; and from whose numbers one may gain a detailed idea of what Flemish song was like at the beginning of the twentieth century. In reality, the study of this repertory discloses nothing so very astonishing. These little compositions, to tell the truth, may be divided into three classes which, in themselves, are not so unusual. First of all, we have the folk-song in idealized form, conceived in the tradition of Peter Benoît<sup>3</sup>; then we have the melody modelled after the *lied* of Schubert, Schumann and Brahms; and finally, the melody displaying modernist tendencies. And we hasten to add that this last type is not necessarily the best. On the contrary: the Flemish composer often unites in unholy wedlock

<sup>1</sup>*Les Gnomes*.

<sup>2</sup>*Songs d'une nuit d'hiver*.

<sup>3</sup>This may be summed up as identical with the *Volkstümliche Lied* of Germany.

contemporary dissonance and a heaviness and awkwardness which destroy all charm, and contrast in anything but a happy way with the frank *naïveté* which the songs of the first and second categories so often exhale. Altogether, *Het Vlaamsche Lied* makes collectively, a well-defined impression of provincialism, or of a localism which lags behind the general musical evolution. Yet the ingenuity with which the Flemish melodists employ their formulas and set patterns has for consequence that their sensibility does not appear old-fashioned, and that they are often able to express themselves with real emotion in a musical idiom which is no longer that of our own day.

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There are, in Belgium, a certain number of composers who, having received their musical education in Brussels, and living in that city, can neither be reckoned as belonging to the Flemish or the Walloon group. Brussels, in fact, lies at the extreme limit of the languages,<sup>1</sup> and because of the fact enjoys a species of esthetic "neutrality," which excludes all possibility of any pronounced racial purity of expression. The more immediate consequence of this state of affairs is a trend toward eclecticism, which, on occasion, is pushed to extremes; as in the case, notably, of M. François Rasse, director of an important school of music in metropolitan Brussels. M. Rasse is a very prolific composer, who cultivates all the forms: piano and chamber music, the song, cantata, lyric drama, etc. His works are well written from a technical point of view; yet they sin in their means, owing to a certain indecision as regards style and a lack of the personal accent which—save in exceptional cases—will prevent their becoming known in a durable way. M. Henri Thiébaud and M. Paul La Gye (b. 1883), possess very precious gifts of assimilation, and progressive tendencies which lead them to adopt with enthusiasm the innovations of the neo-French school. Yet they also have in common the defect of rarely seeming able to utilize these novelties in a truly homogenous fashion. In fact, in handling them, they employ the eclecticism which is quite foreign to their every essence, and which makes their use of them appear constrained and artificial. To combine the lofty art of a d'Indy or a Dukas with melodic effusions à la Massenet is not exactly the happiest manner of forming what we know as style. And it is

<sup>1</sup>Speaking generally, Dutch, or its various dialects, known as Flemish, are spoken in the septentrional portion of Belgium, and French, and its dialects, Walloon, as they are called, in the meridional part of the country.

just this, to be exact, which MM. Thiébaud and La Gye do. At the same time it must be admitted that with this reservation, their art is by no means uninteresting. Both are seekers after the truth and independents, who, above all else, are preoccupied with avoiding well-trodden paths, and seek to surprise their auditors with new forms and formulas as yet unheard. M. La Gye is the composer of numerous lyric dramas, written on the most varied subjects, and showing the greatest diversity of tendency.<sup>1</sup> M. Thiébaud's most noteworthy composition is his monodrama in five acts *Le Juré* (The Juryman), a most curious and questionable application made of the old melodrama principle, a gigantic piece of work, in which the use of the Wagnerian leading motive results in a mosaic combined according to the rules of a logic well-nigh mathematical.

M. Raymond Moulaert very wisely made his *début* under the auspices of Edgar Tinel with works carefully constructed as regards their form, but somewhat heavy and scholastic. Yet, having an enlightened mind and lacking all false ambition, he has, in the course of the past years, singularly vivified as well as broadened his manner. An enthusiastic admirer of the neo-French school, he has progressively risen to the level of intellectual culture without which it is impossible thoroughly to understand the refined and subtle art of the *Schola Cantorum*, and the impressionists who write in the manner of Debussy. And owing to this very fact, he has given up all eclecticism and, though his personality is decidedly limited, has conquered that mastery of style whose absence is so often noticeable in Belgian musicians. His last works—a piano sonata and a number of songs, most of them written to poems of the Middle Ages—offer a brilliant testimonial of what the Belgian composer has gained in enlarging the circle of his intellectual and esthetic knowledge.

Among the artists belonging to the Brussels group we might cite, in conclusion, the youngest of all, M. Brusselmans, a nature rude and instinctive, whose very interesting symphonic poem, *Kermesse Flamande*, (after Breughel) played 1913, at the *Concerts Ysaye*, show in clearest relief, how possible it is, without shock or contradiction, to adapt the most subtle harmonic and orchestral formulas of contemporary French music to the somewhat rude humor of the Brabanter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Franohimont* (1905); *Le Chevalier maudit* (1908); *L'Apercevanee* (1910); *Le Rédempteur* (1916); *La Victoire d'Aphrodite*, *Madeleine*, *L'Ennemi*—the two scores last mentioned belonging to the veristic school.

<sup>2</sup>Brussels is, at one and the same time, the capital of Belgium and the capital of the province of Brabant.

We must still consider the Walloon school, whose centre of gravity is the province of Liège. It was from this province that Guillaume Lekeu came; it is there that M. Joseph Jongen (Liège, 1873) and M. Victor Vreuls<sup>1</sup> (Verviers, 1876), together with M. Albert Dupuis (Verviers, 1877) the most notable members of the group in question, were born. It is a well-known fact that the *Liègeois* is musical by nature. During the Middle Ages the bishopric of Liège was celebrated for its excellent choristers, and, in more modern times the names of Henry Du Mont, Jean-Noël Hamal, Grétry and César Franck are there to testify to the exceptional musical aptitudes of the race. It is also a matter of common knowledge that ever since Vieuxtemps appeared, Liège has become the most prolific breeding-ground for violinists in the world: Eugène Ysaye, César Thomson, Marsick, Crickboom, Zimmer and Chaumont—we need only recall their names. Such surroundings are naturally favorable to the development of musical sentiment. More: the world-wide importance acquired by the Liège school of violinists has extended the horizons of this small territory; it has prevented its citizens from confining themselves too strictly to their weekly round of routine; it has driven forth the young musicians born within its confines to seek their fortunes abroad, and to try to educate themselves in order to rise to the level of the foreign hosts with whom they intended to settle down.

It was thus that MM. V. Vreuls and A. Dupuis sallied forth to perfect themselves, musically, at the *Schola Cantorum* in Paris, beneath the inspired leadership of Vincent d'Indy.<sup>2</sup> The contact thus established was one most fruitful of result, not only as regards those directly benefited, but with respect to Belgian music in general, whose neophytes were not blind to the advantages incident to breathing another air than that of their natal land, and who were glad to draw inspiration from a salutary course of discipline in taste and intelligence. That their racial quality has not suffered because of this temporary submission to the superiority of another nation is sufficiently proven by the example of Guillaume Lekeu, upon whom contact with the artistic circles of France exerted a marvelously refining influence. It "deprovincialized" him, so to speak, and did so without in any way radically changing his ethnic or individual character. On the contrary, it held out to him the promise of burgeoning forth in all the perfection of a clarified formal development and a unified style.

<sup>1</sup>M. Vreuls is, at the present moment, director of the Luxemburg Conservatory.

<sup>2</sup>M. Vreuls, himself, taught at the *Schola Cantorum*. As to M. Jongen, though he never visited the institution in question, he impenetrated himself with its traditions during a stay he made in Paris, after he had won his first Roman prize, in 1897.

Of these three main champions of the Walloon school, M. Albert Dupuis is most sensitive to picturesque extremes, and the changing play of the human psychosis as it is shown in life and on the stage. Hence he is preëminently a dramatic composer. His lyric dramas (*Jean-Michel*, 1904; *Martille*, 1905, etc.) commend themselves by reason of a vivacity and zest largely due to the judicious use of musical elements borrowed from folk-lore.

M. Vreuls is that Belgian musician who, at the present moment, best represents the traditions of Guillaume Lekeu. He has the latter's warm and virile temperament, his genuine and infectuous lyricism, that sensibility which is at the same time both modern and romantic. Nevertheless, he has not his predecessors' acuteness of feeling, nor that penetrant quality of emotion which individualizes in such strong relief the work of the master of Verviers, and in a manner compels the auditor to admit that it bears the hallmark of genius. Yet Vreuls concentrates his musical thoughts in a way which denotes uncommon mastery, not only as regards the use of form, but also with respect to that quality of synthesis which is the privilege of the strong alone to use.

Whether he composes symphonic music, chamber music or songs, a lofty sense of discipline and irreproachable good taste in the invention and disposition of themes is evinced. The *Schola Cantorum*, and its tendency to favor harmonious and well-balanced development is, no doubt, a fundamental factor of his art; yet it cannot be denied that he has succeeded in impressing the forms he has acquired as a result of his studies with the imprint of his own personality. The manner in which, notably, he has treated Verhaeren's verses in the song collection entitled *La Guirlande des Dames*, and those of Ad. Harley in a similar cycle, *La Garbe Ardennaise*, show in an unmistakable manner with what tact and sureness he has been able to adapt his individual sensitiveness to the musical idiom he has travelled into a foreign land to learn.

M. Jongen's music has a strong affinity with that of M. Vreuls. Like it, it proceeds out of the formulas of the *Schola*, and like it, it employs the same mechanism of adaptation. Yet the two men are very different in character. M. Jongen shows less vigor, less instinct than M. Vreuls; yet he also evinces greater delicacy, a deeper refinement. They do not really meet save when both stand dreaming before some landscape of their natal province; then both react to its influence in the same way; it is the same homesickness which grips them at sight of its vast blue horizons, whose sadness is at once so tender and so penetrating. Under all

other circumstances their ways lie apart, and yielding to their differences in temperament, they produce works which, though they belong to the same family, none the less contrast with each other most vividly. M. Jongen is fond of breadth in development; his vigor, which is unaffected, has none of that rudeness sometimes observable in the case of M. Vreuls; but shows a preference for ample lines far-flung and elegantly curved; his poetic insight is somewhat weaker, not so romantic but more impressionistic, perhaps; for all that impressionism has hardly affected him save in its secondary aspects, as in the matter of orchestral color. Another point of contact between M. Jongen and M. Vreuls, is their predilection, on the one hand, for the severest forms of abstract music (the sonata, trio, quartet, etc.), on the other for the symphonic poem naturalistic or pictorial in character. Both, in their common desire to avoid giving away to the temptation of writing for the stage<sup>1</sup>, offer characteristic evidence of how seriously these two chiefs of the Walloon school take their artistic mission. And the enthusiastic acceptance of this limitation by the Belgian public is proof positive that the ordinary esthetic level of the multitude has been raised.

It is impossible for us to cite the whole long roll of the artists who are more or less identified with the Walloon school, and who honor contemporary Belgium by the care they take to write only compositions exempt from vulgarity, and conceived from the standpoint of truly lofty idealism. We should not forgive ourselves, however, were we not to instance, among those artists who have already passed away, Erasme Raway (1850-1918), who composed, quite some time ago, melodies of a modern trend of expression which attracted attention when they appeared by reason of their originality and distinction of utterance; and Théo Ysaye (d. 1918), whose symphonic poems *Les Abeilles* (Op. 17) and *La Forêt et L'Oiseau* (Op. 18), suffused with the true Gallic spirit, enchant us by reason of the ingenious manner in which they have been written, and a delicate poetic color. We might also mention the venerable director of the Conservatory of Gand, M. Emile Mathieu (b. 1844), were it not for the fact that his eclectic estheticism harks back to a period too far removed from the present. Among the contemporaries of MM. Vreuls and Jongen, M. Delure (b. 1876), is a cultivated spirit who has been powerfully affected by the French influence, and who expresses himself preferentially in small compositions picturesque in character,

<sup>1</sup>Notwithstanding this, M. Vreuls has composed a lyric drama, *Olivier le Simple*, and M. Jongen a ballet, *S'Arka* (1912).

limned with amiability and intelligence. M. Léon Delcroix exhibits in his chamber music qualities of elegant lightness, whose pleasing superficiality one accepts without objection, owing to the taste and discretion with which his music is informed.

The younger generations alone remain to be considered. As yet they have not supplied sufficient material for appreciation and criticism to allow for a more precise determination of their general trend of development. It may be said, however, without fear of making a mistake, that the most gifted among these newcomers follow in the tracks of De Vreuls and Jongen, and pride themselves on a constructive art based on the exploitation of well-selected musical material of genuine worth. This is to say, their preference is for music well-defined in outline, conceived, in the main, in the spirit of tradition; yet enriched by reliance on the principal musical means offered by the present day. They voluntarily cultivated such forms as the piano solo sonata, the sonata for violin and piano or 'cello and piano, which allow them to give free rein to their desire for varying and broadly amplifying the musical ideas they wish to develop.<sup>1</sup>

That trend or tendency known as "amorphous," whose source is the impressionistic art of Debussy, only half contents these composers. They do not accept it as a whole, but voluntarily have recourse to it in detail, as regards those harmonic and orchestral refinements which it was the first to initiate. They do so in order to lend their works that pictorial aspect which appeals to their instinctive fondness for color. This "pictorial" side, which is well-developed in Belgian tradition, shows itself in high relief in their songs. Where a Fauré or a Debussy merely evokes with a discreet touch the subject matter suggested by their texts, these young Belgian melodists naïvely think themselves obliged to stress and define with a literal exactness which recalls the madrigalists of the Renaissance. This constitutes a danger which can only be averted by a deeper knowledge of literary history, the only true means of forming the taste without, at the same time, fettering the natural impulses of instinct.

Since the end of the war, the musical life of Belgium has recommenced with feverish intensity. It was to have been feared that consequent to the disappearance of an individuality such as Octave Mans, progressive tendencies, lacking the elements of organization, would break against the indifference of a post-war public, more avid for material than for esthetic pleasure. Yet

<sup>1</sup>As for instance, the sonatas of MM. Henri Sarley and Ferdinand Quinet, and especially that of Paul de Maleingreau.

art is stronger than all else, and we may now feel sure that the great music-lover's work will not die with him. A band of young men, filled with an enthusiasm devoid of any snobbishness, and based on a powerful intellectual culture, has recently grouped itself about the pianist Emile Bos, in Brussels. Bos has set himself the task of revealing to a small circle of chosen artists the most progressive music which is being produced at the present moment in all the different countries of the world. Igor Stravinsky, the leaders of the Post-Elgarian school in England and the Italian modernists on the one hand, and on the other that galaxy of disciples which, in France, now clusters around Eric Satie; these are the principal composers who figure in the repertory of this small band. It is not a question of admiring them blindly, still less of imitating them; but merely of keeping alive the thought that true art never retrogrades or remains stationary; that it is ever in the formative process, and that the only really vital tradition is that which, while on occasion it may draw upon the past, above all expresses the present and devines the future.

*(Translated by Frederick H. Martens.)*



# NOTES ON THE NATURE OF HARMONY

By OTTO ORTMANN

THE word "harmony," in its broadest connotation, applies to any combination or succession of simultaneous tones. Such an application of the word includes regions of tone hitherto musically unexplored, virgin-fields that but await the touch of the capable and observing composer before unfolding their beauties; beauties other than those to which we have been accustomed, but beauties none the less. Strangely enough, the particular field selected for recent exploitation—the whole-tone scale—is by its very nature the least rich in internal variety of tone color. There are many other scales—Scriabine has used some—that offer distinctly greater advantages in this respect. I shall forego the pleasure of exploring these inviting regions here. Instead, I shall content myself with an analysis, albeit fragmentary and somewhat belated, of what is really at the bottom of the system of harmony which, founded by Rameau, has given us such works as the B minor Mass, the Beethoven Symphonies, *Feldeinsamkeit*, and Don Juan.

This system, as everyone knows, is based upon a relationship of Fifths, numerically represented by 2:3. The octave, it is true, represents a simpler ratio, namely 1:2, but in harmony, octaves are conceived as identicals, which precludes their being used as basis for the development of a system. Their identity, however, permits an octave transposition which does not involve a change in the nature of the chord thus transposed. Such a transposition I shall make use of later. But the Series of Fifths, in itself, does not constitute the entire basis of our harmonic system. Taken alone, such a scale of fifths embraces a wider range than that which includes all that we call good writing. Here again is an unworked field, waiting for appropriate musical manipulation.

With the physiological basis of harmony I am not here concerned. The promising theories of Shambaugh, Kishi, and Hardesty may lead to an adequate physiological explanation, impossible in terms of the basilar membrane theory of Helmholtz, notwithstanding certain peculiar advantages of the latter theory.

The concept which gives our system of harmony its individual character, a physiognomy which, though clearly defined, is yet

ignored with annoying frequency, is the concept of Tonality. Tonality or Key, is the selection of one tone as principal tone and of certain other tones as more or less subordinate tones. This subordination involves relationship, and in this relationship is found the key to the nature of harmony built upon such a scheme. They who have read their d'Indy, Gariel, Riemann, Strube, and Robinson will understand the importance of the principle of relativity embodied in the tonality concept, and the logic of the harmonic analysis here attempted. The principles advanced, accordingly, are not new, but it is hoped that the following sketch may throw light from a new angle upon the realization that a fundamental shift of viewpoint is necessary for the teaching and appreciation of harmony as an element of artistic music. Among other things the famous "Don't Trespass" sign, long posted on areas reserved for the great composers—although the latter never as much as suggested reservation—must come down. It should never have been put up.

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\*

The present chordal basis of harmony is a triad, generally speaking, either major or minor. This basis is not permanent. Twelve centuries have seen its progress from the simplest ratio of 1:2 in primitive octave music, to the 2:3 and the 3:4, the fifth and the fourth relation, respectively, of the Organum; thence through the 3:4:5, the fourth and sixth ratio of the Fauxbourdon, to the 4:5:6 ratio of our major triad. The Tierce de Picardie still reflects the reaction to the minor triad as a dissonance; the present time shows signs of accepting other, more complex chords, as complete consonances, and the future will record the passage of subjective consonance to yet higher ratios. The so-called major and minor duality of our harmonic system is not as sharply defined as we are often led to believe, for the differences in consonant or dissonant character of the two chords are too great to permit interchangeable use. Here the attempt at analysis will be made from the basis of the major triad only. The conclusions reached apply, in general, to the minor triad also, allowing for the differences in the scales of the two modes and in the ratios of the two chords.

Let us choose C as the central tone of a tonality or key which we call C major. Since our simplest ratio is the 2:3 the next related tone will be G. Not lower F, for C would be related to F as 3:2. We take the fifth in an ascending direction because

whatever be the modifications it has met with, the harmonic basis in nature is the harmonic series of overtones, not undertones, in spite of Riemann's splendid hypothesis. As we continue the selection of tones on the basis of ascending fifths, we get



Another fifth, F#, would take us out of the tonality of C major. The tones given, therefore, form the tonality as far as a series of fifths can do so, and since there is no other source from which to draw, these tones must form the entire harmonic basis.

By building a triad on each of the given tones, we get:



The *triad* on B, since it is a diminished triad, must be excluded from the real harmonic basis, which is limited to major and minor. It is included here merely to bring out more clearly certain relationships described later.

Obviously, at the pitches indicated, the sounds are musically not serviceable, or at least less so than in some other relation. Accordingly, we transpose by octaves, a transposition, which, as we have seen, does not alter the nature of the chord. Thus transposed, our series becomes:



This gives us a central chord *U*, to which five other chords are more or less related. As we pass from *U* to *M*, we pass upward in fifths, away from the key-tone or the key-chord. As we pass from *M* to *U*, we pass downward in the series of fifths and toward the key-chord. The chord *S* is nearest related to the key-chord, the chord *R* next and so on. In this relationship is the first harmonic principle: musically a chord is always a part of a tonality, and bears various relations to the other chords of that tonality.

The second principle is that all chords tend to pass *into* the key-chord. The latter is a point of rest to which the other more

or less transient chords tend to lead. Consequently, triads differ not only in their structure, but also, and this is the important point, in function. In the key of C major, every triad other than that on C is harmonically, musically, or tonally, a dissonance, and demands harmonic resolution as much as a seventh or a suspension demands its non-harmonic resolution. The musical purpose of a succession of chords is the establishment of the key of which they are a part, for tonality is one of the two basic harmonic concepts. Such fixing of key is accomplished by progressing *toward* the key-chord and not away from it. And it will be found that any succession of chords passing along the series from *O* to *U* is a harmonically acceptable progression. It is this because it adheres strictly to the true harmonic progression, a progression in descending fifths.

Chords stand in true harmonic relation only if their roots are a fifth apart. The basic interval of chord structure, however, is not a fifth, but a third. Accordingly, the third is a harmonic interval. It cannot be primary because it is not present in the original series of fifths. The E in the series, Fig. 1, for example, has a different harmonic function from that of E used as third of a triad on C. But it can be secondary, because the chords which we built upon the single tones of Fig. 1 contain not only a fifth, but also the interval of a third. By placing triads in third-relationship to those already derived, we get as our complete chordal series:



The added chords are *N*, *Q*, *T*. They could not come at any other points in the original series because they would then not stand in harmonic relation to the neighboring chords, the basis of primary harmonic relation being a fifth, that of secondary harmonic relation, a third. The primary harmonies of C major are the chords *O*, *P*, *R*, *S*, *U*. And the secondary harmonies are the chords *N*, *Q*, *T*. But is not *N* the same as *S*, and *T* the same as *O*? Not at all! This point illustrates the most fundamental error to which the usual treatment of harmony has been subject. It results from the mistake of considering chords as separate entities, irrespective of their environment, from placing their structure first and their function second. *Harmonically speaking, an isolated chord does not exist.*

Since there is but one basic harmonic relation, that of the fifth, all harmonic progressions are primarily felt in this relationship. Thus the secondary relation of the third, is an incomplete relation of the fifth, and tends so to be felt. That is, *N*, in Fig. 4, has the harmonic function of *O*; *Q* has the harmonic function of *R*; and *T* has the harmonic function of *U*. *N* could not have the harmonic function of *M*, nor *Q* of *P*, because that direction is anti-harmonic, away from the key-chord instead of toward it. Now we are back to our original series of fifths:



and we see that it is the environment which *makes* the chord. The musical value and nature of the latter changes with each change in the environment. In the series given, *N* is not *S* but an incomplete *O*; *T* is not *O* but an incomplete *U*. *Q*, generally viewed as sub-dominant, demands some further explanation.

There is no self-existing harmonic sub-dominant function in music. For we have seen that our series of chords of primary relationship leaves no room for an *F* as independent tone. It has been explained as a secondary relation. But what is more important, is, that, thus explained, it has a *dominant* function, because it is related to *R*, the second chord in the dominant series of fifths. The F-A-C when used as a sub-dominant, is an entirely different chord in function. The sub-dominant effect, which is not really a progression anti-clockwise around the circle of fifths, depends upon a preceding dominant effect. The progression IV-I is really only felt as IV-I when it has been preceded by some V-I progression. Played alone, without accent, IV-I is usually felt as I-V. (The numerals used merely designate the chordal structure). Thus the effect of the Plagal Cadence depends upon a preceding form of the Authentic Cadence, for the true character of the sub-dominant is a deviation from the dominant, or harmonic progression, and where the latter has not existed, the former obviously cannot exist. The charming, often unusually beautiful effect of a sub-dominant coda, depends upon the contrast with the preceding dominant effect. Why, for example is the typical harmonic form of a period I-V-I-IV-I and not I-IV-I-V-I? The chord *Q* therefore (Fig. 5), has not a sub-dominant function at all, it is a dominant chord, that is, it belongs to the dominant series. Its use as a

sub-dominant falls on the other side of the chord *U* (Fig. 5), and naturally introduces other anti-harmonic relationships.

By considering the secondary harmonies as incomplete primary harmonies, the weakness of certain chord progressions, and the strength of others may be explained. Thus the progression *M-N-O* or *S-T-U* is *harmonically weak* because it is really a harmonic reiteration, *V-I-I*, and reiteration stops harmonic flow. The value of chord reiteration is found in the melodic aspect of music, hence the rule to use chord repetition in places where a marked melodic shift is required or desired. On the other hand, as has been pointed out, any chord progression such as *Q-S-U* is good, because *Q* being harmonically *R*, produces the perfect primary progression *R-S-U*. *The succession [M]-O-P-R-S-U with its modification [M]-N-P-Q-S-U or any part thereof, taken in the given direction, is the only fundamental harmonic progression in all music.*

All other chord progressions are melodic, not harmonic in function. They have their essence in diatonic or chromatic progression, as the true harmonic progressions have their essence in the harmonic fifth-relationship. It is true, that even in the harmonic series, some of the upper voices, but never the bass, will move in diatonic steps, that is, melodically, but it is also true that such progressions are determined far less by this factor than by the harmonic relation existing between the chords. Proof of this is found in the greater freedom with which primary harmonic progressions are connected as compared to the non-harmonic progressions. In the latter case, it is the melodic steps which make the progression *possible*. As a consequence, wherever there is diatonic progression on a bass other than a harmonic bass (fifth-relationship), the true harmonies are not represented by the chords as written.

All connections involving inversions of triads; seventh, ninth, and higher chords, with their inversions; suspensions, and altered chords, are melodic, not harmonic progressions. As such they obey the psycho-physiological laws of melody, which are essentially different from those of harmony as here outlined. As soon as we add a seventh, or a ninth, or any dissonant interval to a triad, this added tone has a melodic function.

This leaves the clock-wise, anti-harmonic fifth-progressions, such as *S-R-P* in the Figures, to be explained. These, too, without exception, are melodic in function, for they violate the second principle of harmonic progression, which demands movement *toward* the key-chord. But what of the progression



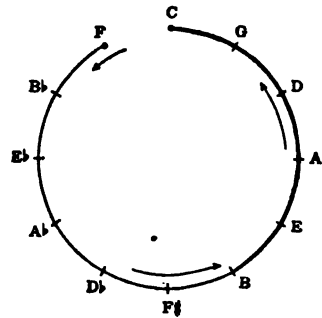
which certainly is musically acceptable? This is likewise a melodic progression. *Harmonically the sub-dominant cannot be explained as the under-dominant.* This becomes evident when we consider the different treatments which the IV-I and the V-I demand in music, and the difference in their effects, one of which is not the opposite of the other but involves a difference in kind. The sub-dominant stands in no harmonic relation to the tonic; the relationship is melodic. Far from being of almost the same harmonic importance as the dominant, the sub-dominant, through its *melodic* proximity to the tonic, is merely the most important example of the anti-harmonic fifth-progressions. The musical satisfaction which IV-I gives, is not the result of the harmonic progression of IV into I, but the result of the IV already being a I. That is,

the  is a discord, whether F is in the bass or not, a

double suspension resolving directly into the key-chord 

As a discord, its function is melodic. When introduced, in the coda, for example, by the seventh chord, (in C major by C, E, G, B $\flat$ ) it is also melodic, for all sevenths are melodic tones. The sub-dominant effect, therefore, is not a harmonic effect opposite to the dominant effect; it is a melodic effect of a different kind. *There is but one harmonic relation in music, and that is the dominant tonic relation.*<sup>1</sup> All else is melodic. The Circle of Fifths can only be explained anti-clockwise. Never in the reverse direction. It is not to be conceived as a figure symmetrical with respect to any

diameter. In the tonality of C, not as



<sup>1</sup>Strube: A Treatise on Harmony.

but rather as



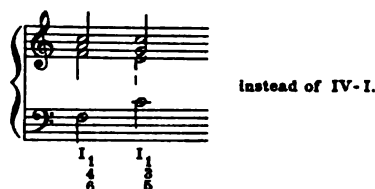
The third harmonic principle, which is but a further application of the two principles described, is that every discord is musically felt as a part of the tonality of which the next tonic harmony is the key-chord, regardless of the number of chords intervening, and often changing in function with the onset of a new phrase. The key-chord will consist of an uninverted triad, tonic function, on some metrically accented beat. (This last statement is but a generalization. It must suffice here, for even a brief treatment of the rhythmic aspect of harmonic progression, would take us too far afield.)

The first result of the application of these principles, is that we may no longer consider such chords as the cadential four-six and the passing four-six, or the dominant IV, represented in the figures by *Q*, and the sub-dominant IV, which represents a melodic relationship, as one and the same chord. Musically, and that, after all, is the point that counts, the forms of chords mentioned are as different as the major and the minor triads. Such a conception necessarily changes our system of figured bass completely. Fortunately, this change involves no great difficulty. The plan which first suggests itself is to number the central or key-tone I, then to number all other tones belonging to that tonality, that is, grouping themselves around this tone, which becomes both their aim and end, in relation to this I by counting the intervals from the *key-tone* instead of from the *bass-tone*. Thus:



instead of I-V<sub>6</sub>-I<sub>6</sub> And as cadence:  
(V<sub>2</sub>)(I<sub>1</sub>)





Next, for the sake of simplicity, we may dispense with the repetitions of I, with the understanding that a tonality continues until cancelled by another Roman Numeral. In like manner, I alone may stand for II, and  $I_1$  for  $I_1$ . The figuring for the first

3                      3  
5                      6                      6

example given is then  $I-I_2-I$ . It is necessary to include 1 in all

5  
7

cases except  $I_1$ . Such a plan may probably be modified to ad-

3  
5

vantage, and is given merely as a possible solution of the problem of figuring chords when conceived in relation to their tonality. Figured bass, after all, is but a convenient form of numerical analysis. The musical function of a chord, since it represents a subjective reaction, cannot adequately be represented by any fixed system of figures.

The figuring as given here ignores the metrical aspect and indicates only the purely harmonic.

or simplified  $II_6-V_7-I_4$

The C in the first chord is a seventh. But since sevenths stand in no harmonic relation to the chord (they are melodic tones), we need not be troubled by the ascent into D, for there is no melodic rule prohibiting ascent. The laws governing melody, even in terms of the Lipps-Meyer theory, involve factors essentially extraneous to pure harmonic progression.

Finally, by taking a more complex example for illustration, the extent to which true musical function differs from the figuring

of chords as generally viewed, will be made clear. Several musical conceptions of the phrase, with the resulting changes in harmonic function, are given, and the unabridged figuring for one of them is included.

Schumann. Bunte Blätter

The musical score is for a piano piece in G minor, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves. Below the notes, there is a line of figured bass notation. The figures are: V<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, V<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, V<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, V<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>1</sub> 4 6 7# 5, I<sub>2</sub> 4 6 7# 5. Below the figures, there is a line with 'G minor I' and 'C minor V'.

The brevity with which all dissonant tones are disposed of as melodic tones may need a word of explanation in its defense. An analysis of the melodic principles was not attempted since we were concerned with the nature of harmony, and the very definition which we gave to harmony, precludes melody from being treated from any other than an almost opposite viewpoint. It may be said in closing, however, that the melodic conception of dissonances will be found to lead to a rational and musically adequate explanation of their use. One interesting result is the manner in which a melodic analysis explains the "raisons d'être," if any, of the rules of harmony governing dissonances, inversions, and chord successions, many of which are inexplicable on the basis of harmonic relation. As long as we conceive sevenths and suspensions as different in musical nature and function; treat chords and their inversions as harmonic identicals; and speak of harmonic relation, such as the sub-dominant, where no harmonic relation exists, we cannot hope to arrive at any satisfactory conclusions. The plan here outlined, at least places the study of harmony upon a musical, and relatively fixed harmonic basis, namely: tonality and the descending series of fifths.

## RUSSIAN COMPOSERS AS DESCRIBED BY THEMSELVES

By JULIEN TIERSOT

**R**USSIAN music to-day is well known throughout the civilized world. The latest arrival among the schools of tonal art, for half a century or more she has given proofs of an activity and a vitality which have brought her to one of fame's most elevated levels. The great works she has produced are familiar to us. Her history we should not be so well acquainted with (for it belongs to a country far distant from us in every respect) had not some of its best-known representatives made it their business to disclose it to us in its most intimate detail. Two members of that group of the "Five" who, though they now all have disappeared from life's stage, still remains the one most representative of the symphonic and lyric genius of Russia, César Cui and Rimsky-Korsakow in turn, and at widely separated intervals, have informed us with regard to its aspirations, efforts and, finally, its realizations. It is now more than forty years ago that the first-named composer published his study on *La Musique en Russie*, in France (Paris, 1880), telling the story of the appearance on the scene of the new school; and quite recently we have been able to read the book of reminiscences entitled *Ma vie musicale*, left by Rimsky-Korsakow, in which the whole history of the period during which an evolution of such great interest transpired has been retraced. Finally, letters of Borodine's have been published which, since they were not intended for publication, are the more interesting because of the fact, as they supply valuable details regarding the artists' private life.

The times have run their course: the book is closed, the thread cut. In the midst of the upheaval which has so profoundly disturbed the social life of Russia, the future opening-up to art in this great country is still unknown. The majority of Russian musicians have left their native land; they are living in exile, and do not feel themselves impelled to produce new works. As to those who have remained, all their energies are confined to giving auditions, performances which eventuate under more or

less precarious conditions, of the approved works of the former repertory. And in the first rank of these works are those proceeding out of the national movement represented by the group already mentioned. It seems as though this might be a propitious time for casting a summary glance over the history of this group, summing up what has been told us by those among its representatives best qualified to speak.

However, their coming forward had not been awaited in France in order to awaken an interest in Russian music. It was thus that as early as 1845, Hector Berlioz, the master best fitted to appreciate at their true value works of a lofty and novel trend, dedicated an acutely written study to Michael Glinka, some of whose things he had produced in his own concerts. Subsequently he himself went to Russia, on two different occasions, and for all that he had undertaken these expeditions for the purpose of carrying on a propaganda for his own works, he did not fail to interest himself in the developments of an art of recent creation and, reciprocally, took pains to make it known in occidental Europe. It is most unjust of Rimsky-Korsakow to reproach him for not devoting attention to the young Russian school during his last trip. It was in 1868 that Berlioz paid his last visit to Russia; he was very ill, worn out by the strenuous life he had led, and he was soon to die. It would have been showing him but little charity to have insisted that under such circumstances he study these new works, then only in process of working-out, in a thorough-going way. As to Rimsky-Korsakow, he was just about twenty-four at the time; had as yet produced little or nothing, and people hardly knew as yet whether he was a musician or a sailor. But Berlioz had been in touch with his friends, and his relations with them were most cordial; the letters he wrote on his return to the friends he had left in Russia, and which are among the last of his correspondence preserved, mention César Cui and Balakirew several times, and express his regret that they are not near him. "I know that I am going to die . . . I would like to see you; perhaps you would wind up the springs again, Cui, and would revivify my blood." These are the sentiments he expresses in a letter of August 21, 1868, the last letter of his which has been printed to date.

The two names we have just mentioned are, in fact, those of the two composers, the serious among the "Five," to whom the credit of the first initiative in the new movement belongs. And this initiative, at the date we have reached, was no longer so very recent, for those who had taken it had no more than outgrown

their childhood at the moment when they met for the first time. This is how César Cui recalls the event:

In 1856, two musicians, very young, and passionately devoted to their art, met in St. Petersburg. The capital of Russia being the principal musical centre of the country, they made it their permanent place of residence. One was Balakirew, the other the writer of these pages. Some time after, Rimsky-Korsakow, Borodine and Moussorgsky joined them and, little by little, a small circle of friends was formed, which had been brought together by one and the same love for musical art. . .

The activity of this youthful group was immediate and incessant, though individually they were all professionally engaged to an extent which seemed to relegate them, as musicians, to the ranks of the amateurs. Balakirew, the oldest among them, did not long delay in devoting himself entirely to the art of music, though he had taken a scientific course in a university in his youth. But César Cui was an engineer officer and became a general; Moussorgsky was a functionary in the War Department, Borodine a professor of chemistry in a medical college, and Rimsky-Korsakow was a sailor. Nevertheless, all of them became masters, and it was as musicians that they gained fame.

César Cui, after reviewing the outstanding facts of the preceding period, the work of Michael Glinka, the founder of Russian music; then that of Serov and Dargomijsky, the intermediaries; then the patriotic composers and the new-comers, in the study which we have already mentioned, supplied the first valuable indications regarding the beginning activity of the young school. Yet, writing so soon, he could not give a complete idea of the subject: it is Rimsky-Korsakow's book which presents a really collective picture.

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What is primarily interesting about this book is the fact that it allows us to penetrate into the vital intimacy of a collectivity of art, an intimacy so close that it reacted even on the output of the works. And these last respond so perfectly to an ideal held in common, that one cannot always tell which one of the "Five" may have contributed the major portion of labor in a work bearing a single signature. There is hardly one work of Moussorgsky's, of César Cui's, of Borodine's and—at the beginning—of Rimsky-Korsakow's which, to a greater or lesser extent, did not represent the collaboration, in first instance, of Balakirew, their dean and

recognized leader, and then, as circumstances might dictate, sometimes that of one, sometimes that of another.

Examples which prove this abound. On the very first page of Rimsky-Korsakow's memoirs, we see Balakirew, to whom young Rimsky comes to submit his first efforts, busy orchestrating the overture of the *Prisonnier du Caucase*, an opera by César Cui. The young neophyte ambitiously desires to make his bow with a symphony, and has brought along his sketch. And Balakirew orchestrates the first movement on the spot, in order to show the new disciple how it should be done. At the same time he submits his own works to the judgment of his young friends: nothing came from the pen of one of the "Five" that was not at once submitted to the examination of the rest, among whom Balakirew's voice preponderated since, being the oldest (was he not all of twenty-five at the time when Rimsky-Korsakow placed himself under his wing!), he exercised on the others the prestige of an undisputed mastery.

He was obeyed blindly, for his ascendancy was great. Young, with handsome eyes, bright and full of life, a luxuriant beard, speaking with authority and frankness, ready to improvise at a moment's notice, repeating without a single mistake any composition once played for him, he had an ascendancy which none other could gain. . . . Despotic, he insisted that a work should be revised following the very letter of his indications. In fact, more than once, one could discover entire passages of his own in the works of the others.

In one of his own compositions Rimsky-Korsakow has given an example of this coöperation by means of which the master and his disciples corrected each other, rectifying errors which were a natural result of their respective individual deficiencies, and each supplying what the other lacked.

I had, (so he tells us with no attempt at concealment), composed a song to words by Heine. . . . Balakirew was well enough satisfied with it, but finding that the piano accompaniment was inadequate, which was quite natural in my case, since I was no pianist, he rewrote the piano part completely. And it was with his piano accompaniment that my song was eventually published.

Before long it was Rimsky's turn to assist in the collective production and none gave himself up to the task with greater activity than he did. Is it generally known that a large part of the output of the gifted Moussorgsky was simply written by Rimsky-Korsakow? His *Vie musicale* abounds in instances of this sort, and the others have done their share as well. We may follow their collaboration from page to page.

First of all there is a "Scherzo," and a chorus from *Oedipus*, which Rubinstein had included on the program of one of his concerts. They did not sound at all badly, because "these compositions had gone through Balakirew's hands."

The orchestral prelude to the *Chaudes journées en Ukraine* preceded the opera *La Foire de Sorstichinetz*. This prelude was composed and orchestrated by Moussorgsky himself, and I still have his own score. It was, later, put into shape by Liadow. The detached numbers from *La Khovanstchina*, which were played at the second concert (of the Free Music School, under Rimsky-Korsakow's direction), were not all orchestrated by Moussorgsky. . . . The "Persian Dance" was orchestrated by me. Though he had promised this number for the concert, Moussorgsky delayed handing it over, and when I proposed to orchestrate it for him, he agreed no sooner had I spoken, and appeared very well satisfied with my work, for all that I had introduced a number of changes in his harmonies.

There was even more done in this way after Moussorgsky died. In fact, among the inextricable confusion of sketches found among his belongings there was, properly speaking, hardly anything which might be termed finished or completed. Pages differing in the most radical manner were discovered among these manuscripts, and it was often quite impossible to distinguish the compositions which had been partially set down from each other—to say nothing of those cases in which survivors recalled hearing the composer play pieces that were entirely complete, and which they had admired when they grew beneath his fingers on the keyboard, but of which not a trace remained in the shape of written notes.

Among the works which Moussorgsky had planned and which were never completed was a *Salambo*, whose sketches were a mine from which the composer drew material with which to build several other works: matter taken from this source has been discovered even in the most inspired pages of *Boris Godounov*.

"After his death," says Rimsky-Korsakow, "all his manuscripts were handed over to me to arrange and order, to complete the works which had been commenced and to prepare them for publication." With entire disinterestedness the composer of so many original, living works consented to undertake this long, arduous task, without a thought of remuneration, either for Moussorgsky's heirs or for himself. This labor engaged Rimsky's time for two entire years, and came to a satisfactory end with the composition of an opera, *La Khovanstchina*, that of another, *La Foire de Sorotchinez*, choruses, orchestra compositions, etc.,

completed after note-sketches, and incomplete and unorchestrated manuscripts.

In *La Khovanstchina*, especially, there was much to rewrite and recompose; there were, for instance, unnecessary and repulsive sections in the first and second acts, which tended to make them too long; while the fifth act, on the contrary, was largely lacking, and what there was of it was sketched out only in the most superficial manner. The chorus of the Rascolniki, with the bell-effect before they mount the woodpile to be burned alive, had to be entirely rewritten, since it was quite impossible as it had been primarily written. As for the final chorus, it only existed in the shape of a melody, written out by Mme. Karmalina, and given by her to Moussorgsky. Utilizing this melody, I wrote the entire chorus, as well as the orchestral episode accompanying the scene of the burning at the stake. For a monologue in the fifth act I used music which I had taken from the first. The variations in Neapha's song, in the third act, were considerably modified and worked over by me.

*La Nuit sur le Mont Chauve*, a symphonic piece which has been played more than once in our Parisian concerts, has undergone the most extraordinary avatars, turn and turn about, at the hands of Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakow. In the beginning it was a youthful composition of the first-mentioned composer, written in imitation of Liszt. Balakirew having criticized it severely, the composer had laid it aside. Deciding to appeal from the condemnation pronounced on it, he took it up again later on, introduced vocal parts, and a place was made for it in Rimsky's *Mlada*. But *Mlada* was in turn abandoned, and then the composition passed (still tentatively) into Moussorgsky's *La Foire de Sorstichinetz*, where it was to serve to accompany a fantastic dream. Thus this piece first took form as a solo for piano and orchestra, and in its second and third versions became a vocal composition without orchestra.

Since none of these variants could be played in public, (says Rimsky-Korsakow), I determined to write an instrumental piece with the material furnished by Moussorgsky, retaining all that was best and most unified in the composer's work, and avoiding, so far as possible, to add to it any conceptions of my own. The proper thing to do was to create a form in which Moussorgsky's ideas would be framed to the best advantage. The problem was a difficult one. . . .

It was in this way that Moussorgsky's music was written and to quote our author once more:

All these manuscripts were in a condition of the greatest disorder. Among them were the most absurd harmonies, monstrous passages of solfeggio, strikingly illogical modulations, instrumentations which had failed of success, orchestrated numbers all giving proof of the most



impudent amateurishness and an absolute technical impotence. In spite of all this, these productions in most cases showed such greatness of genius, such originality, and so novel a character, that their publication appeared to be indispensable. Nevertheless, they called for arrangement, for a coördination without which they could command no more than a biographical interest. In this way, Moussorgsky's works still will be able to exist in all their freshness half-a-century after his death. When they become public property, it will always be time enough to undertake this purely biographical edition, since I have handed over all manuscripts to the Imperial Public Library.

Even *Boris Godunov*, represented during the composer's lifetime, reflected the mutations undergone owing to these successive additions. Moussorgsky wrote his score himself, and his orchestration was conceived without brilliancy. There was, for instance, a Polonaise, brilliant as regards its musical style and its form; but whose instrumentation had been written, no doubt in the spirit of archaism, in the retrospective style of Lulli's *petits violons*. Rimsky-Korsakow invested it with a brilliant Wagnerian orchestration—so he informs us—and the effect of the piece was enhanced. And later he elaborates a complete new "edition" of *Boris Godunov*. In this new working-out the score was first executed at the Petrograd Conservatory, conducted by the "editor," and was then taken over and definitely placed in the Maryinsky Theatre.

I was beyond measure satisfied with my editing and orchestration of *Boris*, (wrote Rimsky-Korsakow), which I have heard for the first time with the accompaniment of a grand orchestra. Fervent admirers of Moussorgsky looked rather huffed and expressed vague regrets. Yet in subjecting *Boris* to a revision I did not suppress the original version. When the day comes that the original is found to be superior to my revision, it will only be necessary to present the work according to Moussorgsky's own score.

It is in this final form, however, in whose preparation Rimsky-Korsakow was associated, as we have just shown, that *Boris Godunov* has been performed wherever this fine work has been staged.

After Moussorgsky comes Borodine—who died even more prematurely, and without having completed his musical life-work. Even while still living, he had not disdained the aid of his friends. When, in the season of 1878-1879, Rimsky-Korsakow was entrusted with the directorship of the Petrograd School of Music, he announced on his program the first hearing of the dances from *Prince Igor*, in the belief that Borodine had completed the opera in question. But this was not the case. The orchestration was

lacking altogether, and, in fact, it was necessary for Rimsky-Korsakow and another friend, Liadow, to get to work and supply it. To their efforts is due the brilliant instrumentation of these dances, which have become so famous. On another occasion, Rimsky-Korsakow, disappointed at realizing that his friend Borodine, occupied by other matters, seemed to lack all initiative to proceed with the composition of "his best opera," offered to act as his musical secretary, and carried off with him to the country pages of sketches in order to put them in shape. Hence, when Borodine died, it was quite natural that Rimsky-Korsakow should undertake to gather and save for posterity such precious fragments as might be found. *Prince Igor*, notably, was far from having been completed. After mentioning those portions which Borodine had last written, Rimsky goes on to say:

Yet these pieces were still in the form of piano sketches; and, finally, the remainder were only present in the shape of incomplete and confused drafts, without saying anything of numerous gaps. Thus, there was no book for the second and third acts, not even a scenario; only here and there a few stanzas had been set down accompanied by chords, which, however, had no relation to each other. Fortunately, I remembered what these two acts should contain from conversations I had had with Borodine, even though he had not been altogether decided as regards his intentions. In the third act in particular the music was missing. It was understood, therefore, between Glazounow and myself, that he should compose all that was missing in the third act and, drawing on our memory, he would write the overture which the composer had often played for us. For my part, I was to look after the orchestration of the entire work, the composition of what was lacking and the coördination of the numbers left uncompleted by Borodine.

We may admire, in passing, the penetration of these geniuses who, under the impulse of their fraternal feelings, could thus supplement each other in the most natural way in the world, as well as the mnemonic fidelity which allowed his survivors to restore entire pages that the original composer had never set down on paper.

Hence, is it altogether fair to concede to the original composer the merit of having written a work so evidently collective, and should not Borodine's *Prince Igor* with quite as much justice bear the signature of Rimsky-Korsakow and Glazounow as well as his?

And it is not alone to his immediate contemporaries, to his comrades, that Rimsky-Korsakow rendered such good offices. We see him, in addition, busy revising the choruses of Glinka. He also orchestrated an opera by one of his predecessors, Dargomijsky,

*Le Convive de pierre*, which the composer had left simply in the shape of a vocal score. He even undertook this task twice, beginning it in his youth and resuming it later, in order to give the work of a colleague a definitive existence.

He was also accustomed in his own case to undertake such "remakings." *Pskovityanka*, his first opera, was written three times: on the first occasion with the exuberance and freshness of youthful imagination, but also with youth's lack of skill. The second time he rewrote it under the disillusionizing influence of his academic studies; the third time, finally, with the experience of an art which had come into its full heritage of development.

*Sadko*, the symphonic poem, was one of his earliest works. It was played in Paris (at the Concerts-Pasdeloup), when still a novelty, a long, long time ago. Later on the composer reshaped it, while still allowing it to retain its original form as an orchestral composition. At length, he did not shrink from composing a third *Sadko*, this time an opera, in which he employed all the thematic elements found in his preceding symphonic pages.

*Antar* is one of Rimsky-Korsakow's most perfected concert-pieces. Still he mentions it as being among his first attempts, dating back to a period when, as he himself avows, he hardly knew how to write. It must be that in this case, too, he gathered up his thematic elements and subjected them to a reconstructive process later on.

The other masters of the group, though they did not work so hard, acted in the same manner. Rimsky-Korsakow's *Vie Musicale* testifies to the fact that Moussorgsky, who left so many incomplete works at his death, himself subjected some of the works of others to this same process by which the musical material is taken up again, and reworked and reshaped in a thousand ways. Instances of his having done so are known.

It was because, at the time their group came into being, these musicians, so truly impulsive, with so fresh an ichor in their veins, and but newly entered upon a domain of art which also was practically a novelty in their country, had such confidence in their budding genius that they wished to write nothing but what was exclusively and directly dictated by it. The example of their predecessors only seemed to them calculated to modify their own personality: their aim was to stand on their own feet creatively. Yet they were not long in realizing that their improvisations would not withstand the test of time. Hence their perpetual hesitations, their continual reworking of compositions whose generative ideas remained vital, but whose uncertain

formal structure weakened their effect. They found it necessary, when experience had opened their eyes, to abate somewhat that sovereign contempt which they had flaunted for all that tended to be scholastic. Rimsky-Korsakow's example in this respect is most significant.

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He had entered Balakirew's group in 1861, when he was no more than seventeen years of age. At the time he was a student in the Naval school, and had taken a few piano lessons (he always regretted that they had been so few in number) and, purely by instinct, he had covered a few sheets of music-paper with his scribblings. This was the beginning and the end of his musical knowledge. He submitted a Nocturne and some symphonic fragments to Balakirew, and the latter at once told him that he would have to write his symphony in complete form. And in this manner, without even knowing what a chord of the seventh, a modulation, a development, a tie or a tone really was, the young man undertook to rival Beethoven.

The incidental works which they read among themselves and then criticized apart, were the only musical examples which the members of the group could follow. Their repertory was restricted and their opinions regarding the masters who had produced them were distinguished principally by their severity; Balakirew and Moussorgsky being the pianists of the group, they played transcriptions of the Schumann symphonies and the last quartets of Beethoven for four hands. As regards the last named composer his eight earlier symphonies were, in their judgment, only "middling successful;" their themes "were adjudged feeble." In fact, these "melodic creations" were but little relished by the group of young Russian musicians. Chopin's melodies appeared to them "mawkish and written for the ladies," and he himself was even termed "a neurotic worlding." Mendelssohn's compositions seemed "shrill and written to please the taste of small shopkeepers." Bach's fugues, nevertheless, were esteemed, according to one paragraph, while in another the composer of the "Passion" is called "petrified." Mozart and Haydn were regarded as "antiquated and naive." And, note the following affinity: "Berlioz, whose acquaintance they were just beginning to make, was highly appreciated," while Liszt was regarded as "musically corrupt and at times even caricaturistic." Wagner was hardly mentioned, according to the first chapter, but the fourth, recording

remembrances of the presentation of *Lohengrin* in Petrograd, says frankly: "Balakirew, Cui, Moussorgsky and myself were in a box with Dargomijsky. We expressed all our contempt for *Lohengrin*."

In fact, the only models which these new creators accepted were those which they offered one another, in the shape of their own compositions, as well as the works of their immediate predecessors in Russia, after Glinka. And they were not gentle, either, with those composers who did not belong to their own little group. (Lwov was accounted a nullity, Rubinstein without either talent or gift for composition; and, later, Tschaiakowsky was only tolerated because of his amiable character, not at all because of his music). "His conservatorial education always raised a barrier between him and us," says our author. In brief, there never was a more narrow, more intolerant little group, a little circle more closely united; and yet one which has given an example of such power. And still, its surprising originality all resulted from its application of the principle to which it conformed with inexorable rigor: *Farà da se* (Act of your own volition).

Nevertheless, the moment could not fail to come when a spirit as judicious and well-balanced as that of Rimsky-Korsakow was obliged to admit that instinct, powerful though it might be, was not everything in art-creation; that mere practical development, swiftly degenerating into empiricism, does not suffice for the invention of the diverse and multiple forms without which the labor of art cannot renew itself; that, in a word, there is a minimum of technical knowledge, of professional knowledge, "which cannot be ignored if one wishes to write," and it is the following circumstances which opened his eyes to the fact.

In 1871, he was twenty-seven years of age, and was still a naval officer. He had composed and had presented his first opera, *Pskovityanka*, and his first symphonic poems, *Sadko* and *Antar*, which foretold the musician of the future, though they had not as yet spread his fame beyond the limits of a somewhat narrow circle, when he was given a great surprise. He was offered the post of professor of composition and instrumentation at the Petrograd Conservatory. Let us record the name of the unusual man who showed such unexpected confidence in a school which, not without reason, was reputed to be revolutionary, even anarchistic in its tendencies. He was called Azantchevsky, had just been appointed director of the Conservatory, and claimed that "he would vivify the waters which had grown stagnant."

This offer caused the scales to fall from Rimsky-Korsakow's eyes. Professor of composition, he, who had never even learned to compose! How then was he to teach composition to others? He hesitated. His friends encouraged him. They, who had always held themselves aloof from all that might be called "constituted authority," regarded this recognition of one of their number as an entering wedge for their party in the counsels of the government. Hence he accepted the position offered. Yet, honestly, he began with self-examination: "Although the composer of works which held their own and did not sound badly, and which had earned the approval of the public and of many musicians," he says, "I was only an amateur and knew nothing. I admit this openly before all."

It seems to me that this confession recalls another, that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, admitting the gaps in his own musical education. He, too, has been freely accused of being an amateur. Will we be more indulgent in his case when it turns out that, later, a master of Rimsky-Korsakow's calibre says the identical thing about himself?<sup>1</sup>

In order to make the necessary progress, the new-comer at the Conservatory acted in exactly the same way. "I learned music through teaching it," Rousseau had said; and it was through teaching composition that Rimsky-Korsakow found the way to a knowledge of its mechanism and its principles. With frank good humor he tells us that, at the commencement of his professorial career, the pupils who were more advanced in their studies quite unconsciously gave him his education; after which he felt himself able to instruct the others.

Yet it was a composer that he realized in an even greater degree the benefits of theoretic and professional instruction:

After I had composed *Pskovityanka*, (he concludes), the lack of harmonic technic caused my inspiration, which had at its disposal only the same worn processes, to come to a halt. It was only the development of technic, which I had set myself to studying, that made a renewal of my creative powers possible, by injecting them with a fresh current and reawakening the flow of my interior activity.

We have just quoted the case of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The great minds of the French eighteenth century were endowed with a penetration, a power of apperception which led them, a

<sup>1</sup>One might object that after having made his *début* with amateur works Rimsky-Korsakow, later on, showed great mastery; while Jean-Jacques Rousseau never rose above the level of the *Devin du Village*. Yet this was because instead of writing new scores, he gave the world *Emile*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Contrat Social*. Had he continued to follow music, it is certain that he would have made the same progress.

century in advance, to discover truths which our contemporaries believe they themselves have been the first to note. Let us cite, as an example, what Rameau has written, in order to prove that genius must needs be fructified by art:

He whose taste has been formed merely by comparisons which are within the scope of his sensations, is able, at the most, to excel only in certain genres. When you take from him the characters to which he is accustomed, you will no longer recognize him. Since he draws all from his imagination, without the assistance of art in its relations to his expression, he wears out in the end. In the fire of his first efforts he is altogether brilliant, yet this fire consumes itself in measure as he attempts to revive it, and all that he has to offer are repetitions or platitudes.

"He wears out in the end. . . . ." "His fire consumes itself. . . ." This is exactly what the Russian master, more than a century and a half after Rameau, observed in his own case.

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Rimsky-Korsakow's book is not merely the story of his own life. Just as a large part of his time, as we have seen, is devoted to completing and perfecting the works of his companions, so his memoirs are the history of the entire group of which he was a member: in them the figures of his friends live again, traced in truly striking relief.

One of the most curious is that of Borodine. Some ten years older than Rimsky-Korsakow, he nevertheless took up his musical career at a later period, and joined that group which an irony, perhaps not barren of result, had named "the puissant band." In this group, hardly a member of which was exclusively a professional musician, Borodine was the one who devoted the smallest portion of his time to the art. Professor of chemistry at the School of Medicine, he declared that he loved science quite as much as he did music. And yet it was neither his laboratory nor his academic chair which preoccupied his attention, for the major portion of his time was given up to philanthropic and charitable works, to which he devoted himself with ardor. A strange physiognomy, a strange life was that of this man, endowed with real musical genius, busied at the same time with scientific research, and who, meanwhile, impelled by a spirit of love and self-sacrifice, led the life of an apostle, wellnigh that of an anchorite. He is worthy of a place in the gallery of characters created by Tolstoi, who are contented only in the fulness of true and absolute

renunciation of self. We can see him, as witnessed by Rimsky-Korsakow, consecrating himself, body and soul, to those works of social regeneration which Russia saw spring up in great number during the closing years of the nineteenth century. He had been one of the organizers of the Women's School of Medicine, and was a member of all sorts of charitable organizations and societies for the encouragement of studious youth, of female students in particular. One of these organizations, for which he acted as treasurer, deprived him of a great part of his time. Society ladies, while displaying a great deal of enthusiasm for his musical gifts, took advantage of his unsophisticated character to induce him to sit on welfare committees, robbing him of all the time he might have devoted to composition. At the same time he was given over to the assaults of the Russian students, who, knowing him to be a feminist, too often abused his kindness. His wife, though ill, identified herself with his efforts. They adopted children and brought them up; often the parents came to see them and had to be taken in over night; they were accommodated with divans, and even slept on the ground floor, and the professor's apartment situated on the ground-floor of the School of Medicine itself, was thus transformed into a species of asylum.

As to the current obligations of life, they were the least of Borodine's worries. His in consequence made his friends smile and might often have enriched a monograph—it has already been well-written elsewhere—with piquant details regarding “The absent-minded one.” In summer he took his vacation, which he passed in the country, in the middle of Russia. This should have been the favorable season for his medical work, but was nothing of the sort. He usually installed himself in a vast, but poorly furnished and uncomfortable *izba*, and there he lived a regular peasant's life; his wife going out bare-foot. Thus the summer went by for them, in the midst of privation and inactivity, and without profit to art. Borodine died prematurely, having practically spoiled his musical career, and we have already seen what would have happened to his work had Rimsky-Korsakow not been there to complete and perfect it. It would have perished, practically in its entirety. And yet, what lofty, vibrant and delightful musical qualities it evinces.

The figure of Moussorgsky, as traced by the pen of Rimsky-Korsakow, is no less characteristic. The composer of *Boris Godonov* had been an officer in the Guards, and had then become an employee in an administrative bureau. He was a good pianist and had a pleasant baritone voice: at the meetings of the group, when the



young masters let their friends hear their new compositions, it was Moussorgsky who sang the grand rôles from *Ivan le terrible*, *Pskovityanka*, César Cui's operas and his own *Boris*. None had so deliberately ignored the technic of composition as Moussorgsky; hence he assumed an attitude not alone contemptuous, but actually gloried in his ignorance. He led the life of a Bohemian—a Bohemian of Petrograd, a type quite as strange in another way as that of Montmartre or the Italian Quarter of Paris. His friends at times found it difficult to take him seriously. "His brain is feeble—he has no head," Balakirew said of him. His excentricities increased in number when, after the performance of his opera, he gave up the *bourgeois* duties to which he had hitherto owed his existence, in order to play the artist. He joined a woman singer in order to offer a course in music, in which he confined himself entirely to the part of accompanist; at times he appeared in order to play the strangest possible repertory of transcriptions, improvisations and fantasies. Then, his mind unbalanced by his success, he broke with his old friends, and sought the company of the self-styled admirers who surrounded him in the nocturnal cabarets of Petrograd. He took to drink, became a confirmed alcoholic and died in an access of *delirium tremens*. We have seen his portrait, his hairy figure, with bushy locks and protruberant forehead, giving his features a certain resemblance to those of Verlaine. Was there not a spiritual analogy between them as well? Older in years than the poet, he seems to be a personage in some romantic drama of the boulevards, one which the pen of Frédéric Lemaitre might have portrayed with realistic power: "Genius and Disorder!" That he had genius is not to be contested, the genius which comes from the soul, which is most intense and most human.

César Cui, one of the elders of the group, played a specially defined part in it; he was regarded as a lyricist, devoted to vocal music; while the others, on the contrary, were symphonists. Rimsky-Korsakow points out an "Auberian thread" in his music, whose presence he explains by the composer's semi-French origin. The fact is that he followed a road which diverged notably from that taken by his colleagues. In the earlier period of their relations with each other, Rimsky-Korsakow was aware that he lived in the finer section of the town, keeping a boarding-school where boys were prepared for a military career, for Cui was a professor of fortification. Yet he found time to devote a large portion of his activity to music. Less of a symphonist than the other representatives of the group, he composed operas, above all *Le*

*Prisonnier du Caucase*, a Russian subject, and *William Ratcliffe*, as well as others in which, as the result of a marked preference, he had recourse to French subjects: *Angelo*, after Victor Hugo's drama; *Le Flibustier*, whose music he wrote to M. Jean Richepin's verses; and even *Mademoiselle Fifi*, after Guy de Maupassant's story. He also, to the very last, was active as a musical critic, writing for leading Russian papers, and we already know that he has written for French readers an account of the history of music in his own land. One of the oldest members of the group of the "Five," he was also its last survivor, and it is only quite recently that we were advised of his death, which occurred after the Revolution had begun and Russia was isolated from the rest of the world. If he had survived to the present day he would be the dean of European composers, M. Saint-Saëns, who holds the present rights to that title, having been born the same year (1835), but several months later. Yet it was not given Cui to hold his prerogative to the end.

As to Balakirew, we already know that at the beginning of this musical movement he played the part of the head of the school. He had been started on his career by Glinka, and was the only professional musician of the group. He played piano well and, from the very beginning of his professional activities, had conducted a private orchestra in an artistic home, circumstances which greatly favored his aptitudes for critical observation, and gave him, at the onset, that practice in musicianship which no study of the musical theory and method had given him, seeing that he had never studied these subjects. He was, says Rimsky-Korsakow, "endowed with innate instinct for harmony and polyphony; and he possessed the technic of composition, partly as a natural gift, partly as the acquisition of personal experience. He commanded both the science of counterpoint and that of orchestration, and had a feeling for form, in a word, all that the composer must have." All this he had acquired without a teacher, through the sole power of his critical acumen; and it was because of these natural acquirements that he in turn was acclaimed the master. He was touchy and suspicious with respect to his former companions and disciples, and once they had attained their full development after following his guidance, he could not guard against the intrusion of that evil feeling which it is hard to qualify by any other name than that of jealousy. Rimsky-Korsakow in his own person made this unpleasant experience. When the time of maturity had come to all of them, when each was ready to take his own road, and still younger disciples were joining them,

Balakirew would still have liked to have kept them beneath the shadow of his paternal wing. Yet each took flight in one or another direction, and once more reunited, they grouped themselves under another patronage—that of the Russian Maceanas Belaiev. "A new season, new birds, new songs," says Rimsky-Korsakow, philosophically. But Balakirew looked on this desertion as a kind of treason; he retired to his tent, and toward Belaiev, who had swallowed up his former circle, he showed the frankest animosity.

Rimsky-Korsakow, who had become the outstanding musical leader of the new group, kept in touch, at least professionally, with his former chief; yet this artificial understanding could not well last. It was true that the Russian school of 1890 already was no longer that of 1860-1870. The latter had been more primitive, more natural, more pronouncedly Russian in character; it had profited by the strength of harshness, it had known the advantages of intolerance. The second group had grown more cosmopolitan. In it what might be called the savagery of the primitive period had been succeeded by something more polished, nearer civilization, more universal and also more prolific.

We should note that in the interim between these two epochs the original principle has not changed: forms alone have been modified, have grown more polished from one generation to another. The proof of this is that if the representative type of the first period is Balakirew, Rimsky-Korsakow is the incarnation of the second; and he is connected in a sufficiently intimate manner with his precursors. Yet the evolution had been accomplished and it could not well take place without breaking some ties. Hence the attitude of the two masters as regards each other was necessarily fatal, and the sequence of events which developed between them have almost a symbolic meaning. Both of them officially entrusted with the duties of conductors of the Imperial orchestra, they had, to all appearances, remained on a friendly footing with each other. The day might have dawned which would have seen them once more united in cordial friendship; yet the exact opposite took place. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of Rimsky-Korsakow's career, the Russian musical world wished to celebrate the event. Did Balakirew ask himself why the twenty-fifth anniversary of his own *début* had not been the occasion of a celebration? One cannot say, but it is possible. At any rate, Balakirew officially presented the compliments of the Imperial orchestra to his former disciple; but his felicitations did not come from the heart. The

very first pretext, the self-same day, was seized upon to furnish the subject of a discussion which degenerated into a quarrel, in consequence of which their rupture became definite. Those who know the Russians, and who are acquainted with their susceptibility and their suspicious character, will not be surprised at this disagreement between two masters who had become rivals, two veterans of the vanguard whom one should have liked to have seen, on such a day, enjoying the fruit of their common labors side by side.

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As to Rimsky-Korsakow, his autobiography, which makes him so directly acquainted with his readers, presents him in a most favorable light. "I have finished the tale of my musical life," he says, in concluding it. "It is confused, it is not well-written as regards style, it is often quite dry; on the other hand, it contains *nothing but the truth*, and therein lies its interest." We feel that this final impression is entirely accurate and sincere. Those who were privileged to know Rimsky-Korsakow ever so slightly will have been able to realize at once that they had to do with a personality in whom uprightness and frankness were leading virtues. The perusal of his memoirs can only strengthen this impression.

In his recollections we are able to follow the Russian master step by step through all the circumstances of his life as a musician, from the day of his first interview with Balakirew, César Cui and Moussorgsky, in 1861, up to the close of the year 1906, less than two years before his death. He does not speak of much save his art, which, evidently was his exclusive preoccupation. Toward the close of a single chapter, in a few words, he touches lightly on his ideas regarding the Beyond, and these thoughts are devoid of all mysticism, even of spiritualism in its most elementary form. All in all, the artist appears to us as though imbued with the spirit of rationalism to a preponderating degree. He informs us that one day he made up his mind to solve the enigma of philosophy and esthetics, and that for this purpose he attended lectures and took notes which were to supply material for a book he intended to write. And he turned these ideas destined to formulate theories of the greatest profundity over in his brain until it made him ill. He feared that he would have a brain storm, lost his appetite, and was obliged to stop. He resumed his task on two different occasions, and in each case the same symptoms

reappeared. Unquestionably Rimsky-Korsakow was not meant to be a philosopher: he abandoned his transcendent speculations, once more began to write music and all was for the best.

This was because he was far more the man of action than the thinker: active, decided, energetic, gifted with clear insight. The part he played in the evolution of Russian art is indubitable that of a leader, one who knows how to command. He was placed in turn at the head of various important institutions, which prospered under his direction.

Toward the end of his life, he was drawn into the vortex of events which, although they were localized in his account within the bounds of the world of music, were nevertheless, closely connected with the annunciatory movements heralding the terrible upheavals which were to follow. In 1905, the youth of the universities rose in revolt: the pupils at the Imperial Conservatory followed its example. Rimsky-Korsakow, the professor of the highest class, aligned himself with the young folk, and took his stand beside them. He was dismissed. The disorders increased. In the autumn came those historic days, and the general strike of six million workmen which brought the national life of Russia to a standstill for twenty-seven days. These events had their repercussion in every strata of society. The Conservatory was reorganized, following the meetings of committees—veritable Soviets before the fact—in which, during stormy sessions, Rimsky-Korsakow took a daring part. Death prevented his taking part in other and even graver events, of which those in which he had shared as a witness, and in some sort, as a participant, were certainly the preliminaries.

More than one detail in his book gives us information regarding the state of Russian society at a time when the illusion of its power was still widely impressed upon the world. His struggles with the Imperial censorship are interesting. It seemed at first as though he would not be able to have his *Pskovityanka* performed, since the Tzar Ivan was one of the characters, and an old imperial ukase—which, however, authorized the appearance of the ancient tzars on the dramatic stage, provided they belonged to dynasties anteceding the Romanoffs—forbade their appearance in opera. Why this distinction? "Because," the composer was told, "it would hardly be proper to see a tzar sing a chansonette." Yet, under certain forms of government, favor will accomplish much. Rimsky-Korsakow took advantage of a favorable opportunity to induce a grand-duke to take steps to intervene with the emperor, and the authorization was given.

Later, the same thing happened again, in the case of another score, though the affair ended in a different manner: "A Christmas Night" (*Une Nuit de Noël*). The poem, borrowed from Gogol, had a part for a tzarina, who, for all that her name was not mentioned, and though the characters in the drama were all imaginary, was recognizable as the Empress Catherine the Great. Relying on precedent furnished by the performance of *Pskovityanka* and having received a formal authorization, both composer and manager thought they could present the opera without danger; but on this occasion it was the grand-dukes who grew indignant. The emperor, who had already given his consent, withdrew it after he had listened to them, and forbade the performance. There was only one thing left to do, and that was to change the empress of Russia into an imaginary character, a symbolic figure—and make her a man! It is an example of the bungling, the arbitrariness, the self-contradiction which were the rule under a government at once despotic and feeble, and which, displayed on a greater and vaster scale, were bound to have those consequences which are only too well known to history.

To return to more purely musical considerations, we call attention, without more than mention, to some interesting pages in Rimsky-Korsakow's book, regarding the use made of the popular melody, the folk-tune, in art-works and the legitimacy of so doing. It is well known what use the Russian school has made of this material, which is the common property of the national genius, and to what degree it has been revitalized thereby.

We instance, without adding a single word of commentary, the following definition: "Wagner's leading motive, recalling violent military signals . . ." There is also this appreciation, which the author lets fall in passing: ". . . the trend toward decadence, *which came to us from the occident!*"

We recall that, during the year which preceded his death, Rimsky-Korsakow having come to Paris, was invited to hear *Pélleas et Mélisande*. Surrounded by admirers who awaited his judgment with anxiety, he could not help declaring, with his customary frankness, that he did not understand a bit of it. We may recall this judgment as a supplement to what he says in his memoirs, which he had ceased to edit some months anterior to the time when it was spoken.

Finally, the book stops, from page to page, at each of those works which, all of them together, make up their composer's musical baggage, and here we find that Rimsky-Korsakow has made confessions which are precious. He quite simply tells us

what he has done, and what his intentions were in so doing. To-day we are familiar with his orchestral music, so picturesque, so vital, so rich in dazzling color, and two of his operas have been heard in Paris; this is enough to allow us to understand by means of analogy his explanations regarding his other works with which we are unacquainted.

What stands out first of all, when we consider them as a whole, is their composer's almost total preoccupation, altogether spontaneous, however, with the creation of art-works which would be exclusively national in character. Practically every subject he treats is drawn from Russian legend, history or life. Once, and once only did he accept a Roman subject, *Servilia*, and he was greatly taken up with his thoughts as to the musical color which it would be proper to give this work. He also wrote a Polish opera, *Pan Voyevoda*, drawing his inspiration from folk-songs to whose sound he had been rocked in the cradle, and finding an echo for them in his Slavic soul. As to *Mozart et Salieri*, with a subject taken from a musical anecdote, this little score does not occupy an important place among his works; incidentally, its moral is pointed by Pouchkine, so it is, after all, sufficiently Russian.

But *Pskovityanka*, with which he made his *début*, is truly and broadly a national drama. Its hero is Ivan the Terrible; the score is traversed by scenes from the life of the people, living and colorful, and the composer, not without pride, speaks of the impression produced on the student youth of Russia by his "Songs of the Liberators."

*Sadko*, a subject dear to his heart, is, because of its poem, one of the most characteristic emanations of the Russian spirit and soul. Rimsky, in order to interpret it, created the new form of "the legendary recitative," without doubt an imitation of the *melopœia* upon which the folk-minstrels recited their ancient *bylines*.

There is, above all, one group of works at which he pauses with satisfaction. It is that which represents the expression of a naturalism in which the Russian soul lives again in all its spontaneity.

The first of these is the "Night in May," in which the musician gives free rein to his love for the poesy of the ancient sun-cult, "whose traditions have survived in the masses of the populace by reason of the songs and ritual games unconsciously tolerated and maintained by Christianity." Our author adds, "In fact, the last vestiges of these ancient songs seem to be disappearing, and

with them all the godheads of the ancient pantheon." Thus it is in Russia as in France, where analogous traditions of the early ages disappear from year to year.

Then comes *Sniegurotchka*, this score whose poesy is so vernal, which he composed in the course of a few summer weeks, in the country, and which seemed to him to have been dictated by "virgin nature" in whose midst he was living, among the forests, the meadows, the fields, the riverbanks, the villages with their old Russian names, the birds and flowers.

*Mlada* is a fantasy more exterior in its nature. The composer has sought to find for it effects of sonority as yet unheard, as, for example, when he introduces the Pandean pipes he had noticed the Gypsies use at the Paris Exposition in 1889, in the orchestra.

"Christmas Night," finally, is again inspired by the myths of solar adoration, and by the composers' leaning toward "the gods and demons of Slavic mythology." In this score he has the *koliada* sung, those venerable mendicant chants associated with the traditions of the festival of the winter solstice in Russia.

In this same national, thoroughly Slavic vein, the major portion of the works which bring Rimsky-Korsakow's active and prolific career to an end are also conceived. We have *Vera Scheloga*, a prelude written for *Pskovityanka* after the completion of that score; *Tsarsky Nievesta* (The Tzar's Bride), *Tzar Saltan*, *Pan Voyevode*, "Kastchei the Immortal," "The Invisible City of Kitezh," and a concluding work, *Le Coq d'Or*, shortly after whose completion he died. It is not mentioned in his memoirs because it was written after their completion: the last line in *Ma vie musicale* is dated August 22, 1906, while the score of the *Coq d'Or* is preceded by a preface written in 1907, and Rimsky-Korsakow died in 1908. Yet this very preface fills in the gap thus left in the volume, since it clearly expresses the intentions of the two authors, the poet and the musician. The former, whose labor represented an adaptation of Poushkine, while admitting that the legend he had developed was of oriental origin, none the less places its scene of action "among the Russian people, with all the strong, crude coloring, exuberance and freedom dear to the poet's heart." Rimsky-Korsakow, for his part, wishing to end his life with a statement doing honor to his art, upholds the rights of music and—without dwelling on principles which he had already often advanced on other occasions, regarding the subordination of music to the drama—firmly asserts: "An opera, first of all, is a musical work!"



All these works he handles in the freest and most diversified musical styles, without restricting himself to any one sole determined form; at times taking up again and continuing the tradition of Glinka, at others having recourse to Wagnerian procedure, orchestrally and by use of the leading motive. There are occasions when he does not even blush to fall back upon the operatic style, giving the voices first place, "but not in the accidental, only momentarily connected fashion of making one voice follow after another, as has been suggested by the modern exigencies of so-called dramatic verity, according to which two or more persons must not speak at the same time," but by writing perfectly regular *ensembles*, and, in the end, often assigning the most important part to the symphonic instruments. His individual genius lent this diversified work perfect unity. The mere continuity of effect in such a score as *Le Coq d'Or* would suffice to fill us with respect for the upright and industrious man who produced it, even if the artist, at the same time, had not created a collective output of living art-works, representative among those of their period, and in themselves worthy of admiration. They worthily crown the collective work of this group of artists of a new generation, young and ardent and who, with an activity as great as their patience, and with a conquering spirit of originality, have erected an absolutely novel monument of art. What they did was to place under the harrow a plot of virgin soil, and draw from it wealth which, as we have already seen, in no wise yields to that brought forth by the nations musically most gifted, and subsisting on the traditions of a centuried past.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens.)

# OF NOTABLE PIANO CONCERTOS, NEGLECTED AND OTHERWISE

By H. H. BELLAMANN

**C**ONCERT-GIVERS and concert-goers have conspired to make certain piano concertos distressingly well known to us. The innumerable repetitions of these concertos, judged by the legitimate demands of musical progress, seems unjustifiable; but the experience of those intrepid enough to venture the unfamiliar, exhibit some results of sufficient weight to give us pause in the very act of censuring the less courageous.

A most excellent pianist—a pianist of eclectic tastes and immense repertoire, played in London recently a concerto by Tchernepnin. An habitual concert-goer said, "Oh, I can't go and sit through an unfamiliar work!"

There was but slight critical remark in the press—neither the concerto nor the playing received anything like the fullness of comment which followed later performances by the same pianist of more familiar works. It is, of course, not conceivable that the deprivation of certain familiar critical hand-holds could deter critics and public from an expression of either approval or disapproval. It must be attributed to a state of mind that is quickened from apathy only by the anticipation of familiar applause-making moments which render comparative criticism easy.

We are frequently pleased by the utterances of platitudes because we believe they give expression to something which we believe we have thought for ourselves. The confirmation of our views is flattering though it may be of things the world has known and accepted for a thousand years. In some such fashion are we pleased at a concert by the traditional presentation of a familiar work. It confirms our notion of how the thing should be done and our approbation of the performance and of ourselves proceeds in hand-in-hand amicability by a broad and easy road.

Aside from a very few heaven-scaling achievements in concerto literature such as Beethoven's E-flat, Schumann's, and Brahms' D-minor, whose performance should be frequent and whose audition should be approached with something of sacramental gravity, aside from these we might do well with quite rare hearings

of the large majority of constantly programmed concertos. Of course we shall wish, probably for generations to come, to hear sometimes one or two of the Mozart concertos, if given in concert-halls of appropriately intimate size. The Chopin F-minor may not be a time defying work, but its somewhat overdressed loveliness is engaging even now when we have accustomed ourselves to a more stimulating beauty. Dust has settled forever, let us hope, on the Hummels, the Henselts, the Litolffs and Mendelssohns—"die unendlichen nichtssagenden." The Concerto Pathétique of Liszt, originally for two pianos, is forgotten. One of the others will conceivably follow. Rubinstein's inflated scores enjoy longer and longer periods of repose. Some of Saint-Saens' show indubitable signs of dry rot though the fourth and fifth have a right to be heard more frequently and deserve long and happy lives for their ingratiating charm, suavity and sometimes cynically dextrous handling of gossamer material.

The plaster has already fallen from the poor skeleton of Massenet's one essay in this field; the Martucci is no more; those by Dupont and Godard were still-born and the one by Theo. Ysaye must have seen the light but a short time. The Grieg is still fresh. Many of the Russian concertos are lit by dramatic moments all too quickly obscured by thick German writing—the later Rachmaninoff excepted, as well as that colorful and gratefully short one movement concerto by Rimsky-Korsakoff. Of Tchaikowsky, why not "the other one" sometimes? It tosses its mane less dramatically and paws the earth in less fiery manner but it is beautiful in quite its own way. The extremely Lisztian concerto in B-flat by Bortkiewicz is brilliant and grateful but unoriginal. Max Reger's one concerto for piano is a rather splendid effort. It is done on a big canvas with surprisingly gorgeous color. The middle movement, a slow one, differs in atmosphere and content from any concerto I know. There is a hint of something legendary, almost operatic, that reaches quite to the remote regions of modern imagination. Then there is a hand-filling, ear-filling concerto in D-flat by Sinding that Shattuck would play well.

It is regrettable that Sibelius has given us no piano concerto. He should do a good one. His long melodic line and individual impressionism—a kind of musical fresco—should make capital concerto material.

Of concertos written by learned but quite uninspired lesser German composers there is a small regiment. From these, by reason of superior taste, emerges one by Otto Singer. The concertos by Xaver Scharwenka fail to intrigue the interest. Quite

unaccountably Moszkowski's concerto failed to take on. It deserves more attention—it is sparkling, witty and often distinguished.

One must feel grateful for a very small number of modern concertos most useful for teaching. I insist that when a concerto is too old fashioned, too trite and threadbare for the public, that the schoolroom is no place for it and I resent the remark: "This should be left for the conservatory student and boarding-school girl." We might well be more careful of what we offer to an unformed taste than we are of what we offer to the public!

Two modern examples, occurring to memory at this moment, are highly useful for the teacher who wishes the benefits of concerto study for the pupil who has not the technical equipment for greater epics; one is by Gabriel Pierné, the other, an almost unknown composition, by Isaac Albeniz.

Pierné's concerto is very fresh and lovely, though it must truthfully be said, of extreme paucity of content; but it is so tuneful and so useful for rhythm and crispness of phrasing and is so grateful to the student that even the most conservative teacher must be thankful for it. Instead of the usual *andante* the middle movement is a scherzo characterized by genuine Gallic piquancy. The Albeniz is less valuable but can be used for less advanced players. The first movement affords some excellent practice in double notes, octaves, and rapid passages. The second movement, a *Reverie* and Scherzo is slight; the third, built on transformed themes of the first movement, is good rhythmically. The entire composition is not too long.

Comparatively recently there has been brought to hearing in England a concerto by Delius (I think not yet heard in America), and in this country one by George W. Boyle.

Arne Oldberg's rather Brahmsian but scholarly concerto is one of the most dignified compositions of large calibre that America can lay claim to. There are some very dull ones which are occasionally heard when their composers elect to feature them. The MacDowell concertos have made a place for themselves and are likely to last for a long time, though they show a distressing tendency to wear dull in spots—few concertos do not, for that matter.

Passing in review the number of fine concertos, old and new, we find a considerable number that disengage themselves and stand apart and aloft, but how monotonously similar of content and contour! One tires of even great mountain peaks of unvarying profile.

Contemporary piano concertos lean very heavily on either Liszt or Brahms. Very few can claim an individual silhouette.

I can think of three which seem to me to be exceptions. These seem to be rooted in the nature of the modern piano and to be of the peculiar genius of that instrument. I am speaking of the great Concerto in C by Busoni, the Concerto Eroico, Op. 8, by Ottokar Nováček, and the Concerto in C-minor, Op. 77, by Charles Marie Widor.

The first of these is widely known by reputation or by slight acquaintance with the score; the other two, I fancy, are being called to the attention of many readers for the first time. These concertos, widely different in physiognomy, are yet related in that they are distinguished from the rank and file of concerto literature by loftiness of purpose, profundity of content, finished workmanship and deep sincerity. Although they show certain hereditary traits which but acknowledge the debt that every composer owes to his predecessors, they are yet so original in concept and execution that not one of them may be said to bear more than a superficial resemblance, and these of a technical character, to other works. One thing they have strongly in common: each one exhibits the authentic piano idiom, and so stands sharply differentiated from the two great classes of modern concertos, which, as has been said, lean so heavily on Liszt and Brahms. The Brahms *pensée musicale* is not of the piano, but is abstract or absolute. The Liszt habit of thought, while pianistic in every sense, does not always exploit the unique possibilities of the piano as it is understood in modern times. He foreshadowed in some pages of the *Sonata quasi fantasia après une lecture du Dante* the elaborate and diffused "repetitional percussion" which Busoni uses so tellingly in his transcription of the Bach Chaconne. The intricate and colorful polyphonic web which may be woven on the piano keyboard waited for larger exploitation on Godowsky and Busoni, with a contribution, not generally recognized, from Max Reger. Of course, as has often been pointed out, no one can write as though Debussy had not lived—and no one does.

These features of the piano: its fluid sonority which can be handled in mass and made to surge like waves of the sea, its peculiarly sculptural play of light and shade which gives us a Rodinesque sense of solidity, volume and profile, its vibrant impressionism which the pedal over concurrent harmonies gives us—an impressionism comparable to the effect of broken color in painting—these eminently modern developments appear richly and plentifully in these concertos.

The gigantic Busoni score—it runs through one hundred and seventy-eight pages (exclusive of the separately printed cadenza) in

Egon Petri's two piano version—is probably the longest of all piano concertos. It is in five movements and utilizes a male chorus in the last movement to a text from Oehlenschlaeger's "Aladin." It has had public performances—Egon Petri, a disciple of Busoni, being a noteworthy interpreter.

The German text of the choral section will probably make it impossible of future production in countries where it might otherwise be heard, though I am sure some other language could give us an adequate restatement of the text—Latin perhaps! No one could charge Latin as being the vehicle of any unpleasant hang-over from the late war.

Personally, I have never been quite happy in the German text for the last movement. It imparts a localizing flavor that seems out of harmony with the super-geographical atmosphere of the work as a whole.

Busoni's commanding position in the world of art has drawn attention to his work at times when one is constrained to believe that its transcendental character could have won the notice of only the very few. He has the uncompromising artistic conscience of great genius. So colossal a work as this piano concerto must necessarily wait upon proper perspective for adequate judgment, but a consideration of its striking differences must impress one even on superficial examination with the sense of having assisted at the discovery of a giant and solitary monument of human imagination.

The first movement, *Prologo e Introito*, begins allegro, dolce e solenne. The deftness with which the swift play of harmonic color is handled proclaims Busoni's Latin blood at once. A lesser composer could not have resisted the temptation to be grandiose.

The piano solo begins with a series of magnificent chordal arches whose thematic exfoliation in the following pages imposes stupendous difficulties upon the executant. The first few pages suggest, not in either matter or manner, but in their cosmic magnificence, the opening pages of Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*. It is difficult to recall any composer who has given such aid to the interpreter as Busoni has done in these pages by vivid and graphic direction through unusual words. The following words arrest the eye upon cursory survey of the score: *lampeggiante, burrasco, slanciato, risvegliandosi, fracasso, assotigliando*.

The second movement: *Pezzo giocoso*; the third: *Pezzo serioso*, containing some of the most beautiful pages in the whole score; the fourth movement: *All' Italiana*, a tarantella movement which in itself demands the utmost of the pianist. The fifth movement:

*Cantico*, beginning with a swinging figure similar to the solo beginning of the first movement leads into the choral section. This is very suave and beautiful writing and proceeds by gravely mounting lines over a piano obbligato to a thrilling climax.

It is not the purpose of this article to analyze a score easily accessible, but to redirect attention to a great artistic gospel which no serious student of music can afford to ignore. Very few will ever play it—very few can, but the pianist can learn much about novel effects which may be carried back to the familiar repertoire; the composer will be struck by the amazing unity in a work of such dimensions and variety. It is an unforgettable lesson in composition to observe how even the slightest ornament is made to bear its share in the symphonic burden.

The brief notices of Ottokar Nováček in biographical dictionaries yields the scant information that he was born in Hungary in 1866 and died in New York in 1900. He played in the Boston Symphony under Nikisch and in the New York Symphony under Damrosch until weakness of the heart compelled him to give up playing when he devoted himself to composition. Three string quartets, two concert caprices for piano, the first a *Præludium*, the second a *Toccata*, both dedicated to Grieg, some compositions for violin and a few songs make up the list of his published compositions with the addition of his remarkable *Concerto Eroico* which is dedicated to Busoni who later gave it its first public performance. Of the concert caprices for violin, the "*Pagininistrich*" and the "*Perpetuum Mobile*" are especially effective. Among the songs, the "*Flammentod*" approaches greatness.

The *Concerto Eroico* is in one movement with a number of divisions. In content it is abstruse, technically it is very difficult, requiring in addition to exceptionally strong wrists, great dexterity of finger and the mental capacity to sustain an unusual mood through forty-five pages of closely woven score. Sombre without being fretful, fateful without being pessimistic, funereal at times without lugubriousness, triumphant without becoming bacchannalian, the conclusion leaves one with a sense of the spiritual greatness that accepts life without entirely vanquishing fate. There is just that acceptance of life, almost defiant, which we feel in so many of Beethoven's greatest works, the *Appassionata* sonata for example—in fact, the impression Nováček leaves is that of a rather Hungarian Beethoven. There is a tragic grandeur that wears a garb more brilliant and exotically colored than does Beethoven. Reading the concerto from the dramatic and threatening opening in C-minor to its clangorous conclusion in E-flat one receives a

picture which might be most well expressed by the splendid lines that open Edwin Arlington Robinson's "The Man Against the Sky":

Between me and the sunset, like a dome  
Against the glory of a world on fire,  
Now burned a sudden hill,  
Bleak, round, and high, by flame-lit height made higher,  
With nothing on it for the flame to kill  
Save one who moved and was alone up there  
To loom before the chaos and the glare  
As if he were the last god going home  
Unto his last desire.

Most musicians are likely to be surprised at the claim that the great organist at St. Sulpice in Paris, distinguished composer of the now classic organ symphonies, is the creator of a noteworthy piano concerto. Anyone familiar with his first concerto for piano, a work written many years ago and bearing the stamp of bygone pianistic fashions, would be totally unprepared for the work of the master's maturity as set forth in his Op. 77.

Charles Marie Widor has been growing steadily through a long life devoted to musical composition—he was born in 1845 and has been organist at St. Sulpice since 1870! His output has been very large although he works slowly. A survey of his compositions would reveal that he has always been most keenly conscious of the tendencies in musical composition. But Parisians, like a large part of the musical world, have been unable to think of Widor in any other rôle than that of organist and composer for the organ. The impressive and unequalled performances of Bach have overshadowed the composer of the charming piano pieces such as the delicate, gay and very French *Carnaval*. The *Fantasie*, Op. 62, for piano and orchestra, a large work dedicated to Isidor Philipp and the sonata for violin and piano, Op. 79, dedicated to Massenet, are works of extremely modern character. They have a quality that is highly individual—they are scholarly without being in the least dry, and original with a dextrous avoidance of the commonplace that is greater than cleverness. But works of monumental magnitude for the piano are very little to the taste of the Parisian musical public. Widor has traveled less than most French composers and virtuosi and has therefore not made a public for himself outside of France.

The Concerto, Op. 77, is dedicated to Francis Planté but was played for the first time at the Cologne concerts by Philipp. Philipp has played it several times since, occasionally under the



composer's baton. It has not been publicly played, I think, in America, excepting one obscure performance on two pianos.

Certainly, this concerto could be recommended only for a cultured and musically sophisticated audience. It is very long, it is inordinately difficult to play and its import is not easily grasped, but every pianist should know it as an example of the French school of composition at its distinguished best. For the formation of a pianistic style informed with French clarity and precision, limpidity and grace this concerto is invaluable. The many technical problems are varied and great. Oft-times the phrase under the hand is crabbedly intractable, but the problem solved means an enormous gain in that polish and finish which are so admirable in the playing of the best French pianists.

There is but little "brilliant" work in the first movement—little brilliancy of the fire-works type, but the entire movement is alive with the restrained brilliancy of a well cut and well set jewel. The means are beautifully subordinated to the end and the entire concerto is a document in proof that French piano composition, like French piano playing, has remained true to the genius of the instrument. Everywhere in these pages there is published a profound knowledge of the peculiar sonorities of the piano, whether it is in a simple unisono, two octaves apart, but lying in the best sounding registers as at the beginning of the solo part, or whether it is in widely dispersed arpeggio passages in cross rhythms such as occur near the finale—always the piano seems to be at its best and graciously disposed to yield a surprising euphony upon the economical material used.

The slow movement is contemplative to a degree almost Franckian, though there is no suggestion of Flemish mysticism: Widor is always French. The orchestration is ravishing here for the first twenty-five or thirty bars, then the piano part moves in greater animation and finally breaks from the orchestra in a very striking cadenza. The second movement merges into the third without a pause.

One of the most effective passages in the last movement is made up of rapid descending scales played in the lower registers of the piano against strings only in which the divided violas playing a wavering cross rhythm of sextolets seem to drop veil upon veil over the rising and falling piano figures and the later entrance in the wood wind of a sharply rhythmical transformation of a theme from the first movement.

This concerto is much less ready to yield results of the kind designated as "effective" than either of the other two we have had

under consideration. Like many other art-works of a very advanced and sophisticated civilization it presents at times a rather glacial exterior. The pianist learns gradually that he is dealing with a quite different set of values. These are not the shouting colors of the virtuoso school. Making all the demands of a virtuoso technic, it asks a more delicately modulated tone, a greater command of half lights, and more degrees of force between *mezzoforte* and *pianissimo*. The pianist is suddenly required to speak a very finished French with his fingers!

The music of Widor is a music very different from the music of Debussy and Ravel. He has little to do with that pastel impressionism which is temperamentally such close kin to Oriental mysticism, nor has he much more to do with that Rabelaisianism which Romain Rolland says is more essentially French. His music, as I see it, is of that finely tempered French spirit which expresses itself with an aristocratic disdain of the commonplace and keeps absolute faith with artistic integrity.

These three concertos represent three widely separated phases of modern musical thought; they differ from the large number of compositions in this form not only in degree but in kind: they make widely different demands upon piano technic and upon musical understanding. The pianist who is familiar with them will find himself surprisingly well prepared, musically and technically, for the future development of his art.

# THE ASSAULT ON MODERNISM IN MUSIC

By R. D. WELCH

**M**ODERNISM, new-born in every generation, utters its first cries in unwilling ears. Child of Tradition and Change, it is repudiated by both parents. Not as the legitimate heir of its cherished treasures does a generation greet its modernism, but as an ugly changeling whose features forebode neglect and destruction of all that one of its parents prizes. Yet, somehow, and in spite of neglect, this unwelcome infant comes to maturity; imperceptibly its words lose their harshness; its features soften and its acts prove it the legitimate heir of all its finest heritage. Such is the life-history of the New Idea of any generation.

The musician who stands on a vantage ground, mid-way as it were, between two generations, may review the whole process of birth, growth and acceptance of modernism. Time was (and not long since) when our ears were assailed by strange, new sounds from the piano and orchestra, evoked by one Claude Debussy. Contemporary criticism strengthened the belief of many of us that music had fallen upon evil times; that men had turned their backs on beauty; that melody had been deformed; and that harmony had become an instrument of torture. And then, after a few short years, Debussy becomes our familiar, fireside friend. He appears without apology on conservative concert programmes; his name becomes a symbol for the delicate and imaginative and suggestive in all modern art; he is given over to the tender mercies of the young person who practices the piano, and he attains the fame of mention in the Victor catalogue. But while this process has been going on, we have been confronted by new and more merciless modernists. Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Malipiero and the "enfant terrible" Korngold, now bear the brunt of our hostility. Yet, one may, if he read the future from the past, see for these writers an approaching fate not unlike that which has overtaken Debussy.

Our experience with Debussy—I use him as a symbol for many; substitute Richard Strauss and the argument remains the same—does not encourage us for the future. Nor does it

induce us to temper our assault on modernism. We are not content to say that we shall, in time, accustom ourselves to these strange sounds.

But it is not just to lay the blame for all our hostility at the door of prejudice and tradition. We feel—and the sentiment is genuine—that what is beautiful, and for which the greatest minds of our past have labored, has been set aside and neglected. I believe we are sincere, although we may be mistaken, in the feeling that our dislike of a new work is of far greater importance than our mere pleasure or displeasure. We feel, and I think it an admirable feeling, that our distaste is directed at a fundamental error, and that our protest may serve to rectify that error. We sincerely do wish to see the good in the new; we sincerely do feel that art is falling upon evil times; and more than this, we do try to believe that a vital, immutable truth, although it may appear in ugly strangeness, lives in and animates the art of our day, connecting it with the past, and assuring the health of its future.

Precisely that we may discern this eternal and unchanging principle in music, is it of value to analyze the assault on modernism, not only as it is delivered to-day, but as it has been launched in other generations? If we can detach these features of modernism which have invited attack, we shall then know whether or not the works which have survived the attack have been strong enough to do so because of those very features or for some other reason.

It makes no difference into which age we dip, we find that war is the natural state of man—critical war—and curiously enough we find, too, that the *casus belli* is much the same, and that the strategy of offence and defense differs very little.

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Phrynis was a Greek. He lived in the fifth century before Christ and at a time when man had just found that music could be made by instruments—on the cythera and the aulos—without aid of the human voice. Men had learned it, but by painful steps; and not all men were willing to admit it as a truth. But Phrynis and his fellows, Timotheus and Melanippides, pleased their public with this music and while they pleased their public, at the same time, they brought against themselves the charge of having corrupted the art. Phrynis was reproached “for striving after unexpected effects, striking contrasts, and a taste for the difficult,” while his friend, Timotheus, was censured for transforming the

dithyramb, a hymn to Dionysius, into a show-piece destined to give glory to the talent of a virtuoso. The spectators who had heard a certain tragedy, written by Epigenes, are said to have cried out, "But what is there in this for Dionysius?" "What is there in this for Dionysius?" is the cry of all those who feel that art is being torn away from its exalted place and distracted from its high mission.

Palestrina, two thousand years after Phrynus, directed on his deathbed that the publication of his last manuscripts should be devoted "to the glory of the most high God and the worship of His holy temple," and at another time this same gentle Palestrina accused his contemporaries in these words,

the greater blame, therefore, do those deserve who employ so great and splendid a gift of God in light or unworthy things, and thereby excite men, who of themselves are inclined to all evil, to sin and misdoing.

In his own way, and in a new time, Palestrina was maintaining the standard of the Hellenistic audience: "What is there in this for Dionysius?" A little later, when music had come out of the cloister and the church, and had frankly given up its allegiance to the services of the "most high God," another aim of its being was sought in giving pleasure. With the beginning of opera, music turned to a new purpose and it was held accountable for its deeds in the light of that purpose—to give pleasure.

Monteverdi, who for dramatic reasons introduced dissonance into his scores, became the center of an attack by one Artusi, who in 1600 wrote his treatise concerning "The Imperfections of Modern Music." Signor Artusi, accused the modern composers of having "lost sight of the proper function of music, which is to give pleasure." Dionysius has been dethroned. We ask no longer "What is there in this for Dionysius?" but "What is there in this that gives us pleasure?" The intent is the same. Music in both cases is claimed to have lost sight of its purpose.

From Monteverdi to Bach is, after all, but a short step. Bach, too, was reproached for having forgotten the purpose of his art. He was a young man at the time, and his duties as organist at Arnstadt evidently left his imagination much time for experiment. There is, in an official record, a rebuke delivered in these terms:

He hath heretofore made sundry perplexing variations and imported divers strange harmonies of such wise that the congregation was thereby confounded,

and a witness added that

the organist Bach hath at the first played too tediously, howbeit, on notice received from the superintendent, he hath straightway fallen into the other extreme and made the music too short,

which goes to inform us that the future author of the St. Matthew Passion and the B Minor Mass at times found his parishioners a little tiresome, and that he had a sense of humor.

But the assault on the modern does not limit itself to the purposes that the modernists cultivate or fail to cultivate. Technical virtues or errors come in for a large share of the attack. Mozart's publishers, sending the scores of certain of his quartets back with a sarcastic comment regarding the "obvious misprints," pronounced a sentence on their own harmonic obtuseness. They were not the first, nor alas! the last, to find in every unfamiliar combination of sounds an object of contempt and scorn. Here is Rellstab, the once highly accredited critic of Berlin, anent certain minor works of Chopin:

Chopin is indefatigable, and I might say inexhaustible in his ear splitting discords, forced transitions, harsh melodies, ugly distortions of melody and rhythm. Everything it is possible to think of is raked up to produce the effect of originality but especially *strange keys* and the unnatural positions of chords.

The nowadays better known Ernest Newman puts himself on record, in his work on Richard Strauss, in this way:

Merely a piece of laborious stupidity; a blatant and hideous piece of work. There must be a flaw, one thinks, in the mind of a man who can deliberately spoil a great and beautiful, artistic conception by inserting such monstrosities as these in it.

Henry T. Finck likewise finds Strauss deserving the sharpest censure for the same reason—Henry T. Finck, who, be it remembered, writes with such heroic protest against all the critics of Richard Wagner because they used almost the same words as he used in his book on Richard Strauss:

There are too many dissonant blotches in Strauss' pages. Not content, like Liszt and the other great masters with dissonances, he progresses to cacophonies for their own sake. Hideous daubs of sounds, they torture the ear like a concert of steamboat whistles on a foggy morning in the bay. To these cacophonies, even the admirers of Strauss feel like saying, "Out, damned spot."

The assault in all of these latter instances is being delivered not at the failure to maintain a high purpose, but at the use or misuse of tools. It is beyond the purpose of this article to consider whether or not in any of these cases the critics were justified in

their feeling that harmony was misused, but it may be observed that the disharmony of one generation commonly becomes the current usage of the next, and there is a sense in which the whole history of music may be said to be the history of the acceptance of discord.

Our critics direct their attention to melody as well as harmony. There is one instance of such criticism that might, on account of its authorship, have weight for the unwary. Here is what Ruskin found in the *Meistersinger*:

Of all the bête, clumsy, blundering, boggling, baboon-headed stuff I ever saw on a human stage, that thing last night, as far as the story and acting went, and of all the affected, sapless, soulless, beginningless, endless, topless, bottomless, topsituriest, tuneless, scrannelpipiest, tongs and boniest doggerel of sounds I ever endured, the deadliness of that eternity of nothing was the deadliest as far as its sound went. I was never so relieved, so far as I can remember, in my life by the stopping of any sound not excepting railroad whistles, as I was by the cessation of the cobbler's bellowing, even the serenader's caricatured twangle was a rest after. As for the great lied, I never made out where it began or where it ended except by the fellow's coming off the horse block.

Evidently Mr. Ruskin had a bad evening! To be sure Ruskin has been proved mistaken in his judgment of other arts than music, but what he says here was asserted also by eminent musicians among his contemporaries. And then there is Romain Rolland, who "could not find a single melody truly original or interesting in itself in Strauss' works." Rolland, too, brings up the question of purpose again when he summarizes the whole work of Strauss:

And this is how the work of Richard Strauss appears to me up to the present. Guntram kills Duke Robert, and immediately lets fall his sword. The frenzied laugh of Zarathustra ends in an avowal of discouraged impotence. The delirious passion of Don Juan dies away in nothingness; Don Quixote, when dying, foreswears his illusions. Even the Hero (*Das Heldenleben*), admits the futility of his work and seeks oblivion in an indifferent Nature. We get all this display of superhuman will, and the end is only 'My desire is gone.' It was not thus that Beethoven overcame his sorrows. Sad adagios make their lament in the middle of his symphonies, but a note of joy and triumph is always sounded at the end. His work is the triumph of a conquered hero; that of Strauss is the defeat of a conquering hero.

Rhythm, also, that more subtle and easily confused element in the whole musical mixture, receives with harmony and melody, its share of the attack on modernism. From the multitude of examples that might be quoted I choose a criticism of Debussy's

*Peléas et Mélisande* written by Henry Edward Krehbiel in his "Chapters of Opera."

A flocculent hazy web of dissonant sounds, now acrid, now bitter-sweet, maundering along from scene to scene, unrelieved by a single melodic phrase.

Still, Mr. Krehbiel is inclined to a grudging realization that others may not agree with him. He continues:

No one should be ashamed to proclaim his pleasure in four hours of uninterrupted, musically inflected speech, over a substratum of shifting harmonies, each with its individual tang and instrumental color. Neither should anyone be ashamed to say that nine-tenths of the music is a dreary monotony because of the absence of what stands to him as musical thought.

There is an unusual critical generosity about all this: it isn't common for a critic to admit that those who disagree with him have a perfect right to do so.

And, finally, form is likewise the object of attack. But I shall not labor the case.

The instances might be multiplied almost without number, all pointing to the same conclusion; namely, that the attack on modernism is directed at an alleged failure to maintain the high purpose of art, and at an ugliness and a strangeness which has come about through the use of new harmonies, unfamiliar melodies, obscure rhythms and unconventional forms. As one reads a large part of modern criticism, one feels that their writers could not hear the music for the notes. In many respects they recall the ancient fable of the three blind men who went out to acquaint themselves with the elephant. One of these blind men, on approaching the elephant, got hold of his tail; a second seized the beast by the leg; and the third explored its ear. When they returned and compared accounts, they fell into a desperate wrangle because one declared the elephant to be very like a rope, and the second was equally sure that an elephant was like a tree, while the third maintained stoutly that an elephant resembled a fan. Each was right and each was wrong. In one instance we find the modern critic has seized music by its harmonies, and he reports that the new work is like nothing so much as "a concert of steamboat whistles;" the second has turned his attention to melody, and he declares that modern music is either deficient in this desirable element or else that such melody as is to be found gives evidence of a disjointed and irrational mind; and lastly, our third critic



picks up the rhythm and assures us that we have nothing but amorphous meanderings "without form and void."

Now the interesting fact with regard to all of the quotations that I have cited (and a very large number of others that I have omitted), is that there is a measure of truth in each of them. Indeed, as each of these criticisms was written, it seemed without doubt wholly true to its writer. It must be admitted that there was "nothing for Dionysius" in that lyrical tragedy of Epigines. Wagner's harmonies *did* and some of Strauss' *do* hurt the ear. Schoenberg quite frankly sets about to avoid what is commonly known as rhythm, and as for melody, if it is to be found in certain modern works we shall have to revise the meaning of the word melody. Yet many of the works which we have seen so censured are masterpieces! Are they such in spite of their faults? A thousand times, no; rather because of them, or rather because of what was commonly reckoned faults by contemporary critics. But leaving aside the question as to whether or not the works which have born the brunt of the assault on modernism have survived in spite of or because of their faults, it is clear that the reason for the greatness of these works must be sought elsewhere than in those details which seize the critics' mind. It will not suffice to say simply that the critics were wrong. It will be more true, perhaps, to say that they were partial, biased, or of small vision. The fact remains that these works, however they may have appeared to their contemporaries, embodied a living spirit that pervades the art of tone; a spirit that does not destroy, but fulfils the law.

Can we find that spirit? Can we isolate it from the accidents of harmony and melody and rhythm, or from the purpose to which a given work is directed, whether that purpose be something "for Dionysius," "to the glory of the most high God" or "to give pleasure?" If we pursue such a search, are we likely to find ourselves in the position of those anatomists who, having dissected away all the limbs and organs of the body in their search for the vital spark, find that they have only dead debris? The obvious insufficiency of the criticism that attaches itself only to harmonies and rhythms and purposes, leaves us so unsatisfied that the search for some deeper truth presents itself almost as an obligation. We cannot escape it unless we are content to be partial and superficial in our judgment. If at the end of our search we find we have nothing, that there is no informing life in a work of music transcending the accidents of form and structure, we shall at least be on solid ground, though that ground be "of the earth, earthy."

There have been many who have attempted this search, and they have left us an illuminating record. In a word, they posed the question, "What is music about; in what consists its beauty, and what human purpose does it serve?" Here are some of the answers:

"Music is the art of combining sounds in a manner agreeable to the ear." Thus concludes J. J. Rousseau. It is the same doctrine that Artusi hurled at Monteverdi when he reminded him that the purpose of music was to give pleasure, and it is a doctrine by no means out of vogue to-day. It has fallen, to be sure, into discredit since it has been overworked by that type of critic or semi-critic who does not know anything about music, but knows what he likes. It has long been a favorite sport of the newer generation of intellectuals to show up the absurdities of the conclusions of the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century had no automobiles and no electric lights; no sewing machines and no victrolas. What could it know of life? By the same token the eighteenth century did not have a Beethoven or a Wagner or a Strauss. Its musical conclusions must consequently be wholly fallacious. Yet in all seriousness, even if Rousseau's doctrines were strictly correct, we should never have witnessed the phenomenon of works seeming at first appearance very unpleasing to the ear, and upon better acquaintance revealing great beauties. Moreover, if to please the ear were the sole end of music, what becomes of the other values we instinctively and unconsciously read into fine compositions, such as seriousness or gaiety or vigor or pathos? The fifth symphony of Beethoven pleases the ear and at the same time it satisfies the mind with a complete presentation of an idea, however intangible the idea and difficult to put it into words. The same may be said for the symphony by César Franck, but how different the ideas that we impute to the two works.

"Music is a combination of arabesques in sound." It was Hanslick, in 1854, who came to this conclusion in his treatise on "The Beautiful in Music," after rejecting Rousseau's doctrine and also combating the idea that music is the language of emotions. For Hanslick, music need not please the ear, and for him it certainly was not a means of expressing an emotion. For his clearing up of the emotional quagmire into which music seems to fall in the minds of a large number of writers, we are the eternal debtors of Hanslick. He pins us down to a precise confession of faith. "Is the adagio of such and such a sonata, a love story or a meditation or despondency or what you will?" and we retire in confusion. Emotion plays a large part in any work, but music goes at it so

vaguely—"all things to all men"—that we are forced to the conclusion that if music occupies itself with nothing but the expression of emotion it does its job very badly. Furthermore, this continual picking and probing at emotion, is just a little tiresome. No emotion pure and unadorned ever produced a work of art, or even a rational human utterance. And yet Hanslick's theory that music is arabesque, leaves us quite cold. Arabesque is, after all, a pretty, but unessential adornment. Has the human race devoted so much of its time and attention to an unessential and decorative ornament when it has cultivated music? Is the weaving of pretty patterns the aim and end of music?

Better than either of these theories of music, or better than any of the many others that might be quoted, seems to me this one formulated by Jules Combarieu: "Music is the art of thought in tone." I have no doubt that this definition is found by many to be full of flaws, and that though it may receive general recognition now, will be found by subsequent generations to be as inadequate as those that our forefathers have set before us. Nevertheless, the more one considers that simple sentence, the more comprehensive does it seem of all those elements: purpose, rhythm, melody, harmony, style—what you will—that enter into the making of a musical composition. Its first four words, "Music is the art" define for us immediately the category of human activity in which music is placed. As an art it must take due account of unity and variety, symmetry and balance, and other inescapable conditions of *artistic* expression. The artist takes colors, forms, light, marble, and combines them with his own inner conceptions; he *thinks* with and in them. Just so the musician takes tone, not tone as it exists in nature, but tone as man has refined it. Only rarely does a sound occur in nature that we may call a *tone*.

Sentimentalists are rapturous over the Music of Nature. The expression contains a contradiction of terms. Bird songs come as near to tone, as opposed to noise, as one will find it in nature, but bird songs are not art, for art is a conscious human product: it is the embodiment of man's will in the search for beauty. Man takes tone as he takes marble, and he does something with it. In other words, *he thinks in tone*. He makes it express his thought. "Music is the art of thought in tone," or stated in another way, *thought, using tone as its medium, creates an art-work*. It builds structures that eye hath not seen and it weaves indeed—at times—arabesques. Thought in tone reveals the grandeur or the smugness, the loftiness or the meanness of the human mind—*thought in tone, with no responsibility to anything but thought*. No purpose

enters in except that the thought express itself. Whatever tools, harmonic or melodic, are needed that the thought may express itself, these tools must be employed. And that of artistic necessity, though they may shock tradition and hurt the ear.

We found out, not many yesterdays ago, that modern painters (let us take no more modern a group than the post-impressionists) strove for a beauty not of accidents or externals, but one that was fundamental and eternal. The light that played upon the surface of things, the phenomena that so fascinated the impressionists, to the post-impressionists seemed trivialities of their art; true forms and the nature of things remained to be revealed. The modern musician is working in much the same spirit. He is not concerned with pleasing the ear; he is not concerned with niceties of traditional style, but I believe he is concerned with the fundamentals and the realities of thought as it is found in a complex, changing, strident, modern world. The one abiding fact that is true of all great works of music of any kind is this—that a man has tried to reveal what seemed true to him. Not the current sentiment; not a traditional style, not even that which men call beautiful, have of themselves been the goal for which the truly original creative mind has ever worked. *He has had allegiance to nothing except the integrity of his own mind.* There will always be minds so saturated, so engrossed with their own subjects that they will see purposes hidden to the many, and they will speak with a language, that, while it seems familiar, seems forbidding. So there will always be musicians who understand so much better the untouched possibilities of tone, and whose “thought in tone” is so much more advanced than that of their contemporaries that they will write music that is music of the future. But whether a musician uses harsh means or gentle, whether he be simple or obscure, there is only one question that matters: Has the mind used tone purposefully to the ends of *artistic creation*?

In the contemporary estimate of new and strange works it is generally at first the accidents, the harmony, the melody, the form that are hit upon, but when the attack launched against a great work aims at these accidentals, it glances, and in no way reaches the essentials.

# THE PIANO WORKS OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY

By GUIDO M. GATTI

**T**HE piano works of Claude Debussy, which characterize the composer of *Pelléas* above all others, should be considered by themselves for this very reason, withdrawn, as it were, from the influence of the esthetic total of that musician's output. And even if we withdraw their musical substance—which, as has been remarked, is great—the group made up of Debussy's piano compositions still remains important in the highest degree, if we study them merely from the point of view of the instrument for which they were composed.

The pianoforte has passed through that succession of *technical* phases—we use the word *technical* to indicate, not mute and lifeless mechanism, but the *living* complex of expressive writing combined with especial regard for instrumental possibilities—which is characteristic of the development of every instrument, and which may advance only to a certain boundary of constructive mechanical perfection which it parallels. From the primitive keyboard with its plucked quill, to the dynamic and coloristic possibilities of the latter nineteenth century pianoforte, represents an immense stride forward in the art of the piano builder; but as a result, what a broadening out, and, at the same time, what a wealth of elaboration in the field of pianoforte literature. From the early forms of a thin and transparent schematism, we move through successive stations to the complexity of the Beethovenian and Brahmsian sonata, in which the piano must fairly burst its bounds in the effort of a distention which drives it ever onward in an endeavor to overtake and equal orchestral effects. For the orchestra is the dream of the German romanticists! Owing to this, the piano, little by little, becomes none other than an orchestra of reduced means, the echo of an immense instrumental phalanx, and the arena for *effects*. It gives the composer the maximum of happiness when he is able to hear in the pages of his piano score the blare of the trumpets, the blast of the horns, or the gurgling of the bassoons; the sharp song of the violins or the grumbling of the basses. Just as the piano tends to lose its autonomy in an increasing measure, its distinctive character, thus the compositions written for it lose their intrinsically pianistic

design, and increasingly convey the impression of being orchestral scores reduced for the keyboard instrument. From the chaste eloquence of Mozart to the Clementian sonata, from the intimacy of Haydn to the virtuosity of Cramer and Kalkbrenner, the road is a long one; but the transformation is uninterrupted. There, too, we find the powerful works of Beethoven—an admirer of the school of Clementi—which reflect a distinct suggestion of the orchestra or, at times, of the quartet (this last is noticeable occasionally, in Mozart as well); and the no less suggestive works of Schumann, which reveal symphonic echoes at every step, at times in sharp contrast to the dynamic economy of the composition (as, for example, in the Sonata in D minor, for violin and piano); and finally, the marvelously varied works of Johannes Brahms, that towering musical genius, endowed with imaginative powers as vast as it is possible to conceive; but obsessed at times by the fixed idea of piling up effect on effect, without heeding the limitations imposed by his form and instrument. This, of course, with the natural exceptions to the rule, in particular the three *Intermezzi*. All that Claude Debussy has written for the piano, on the other hand, exists to testify to a regenerated and savorous piano technic, intrinsically pianistic in its nature, whose every dynamic and timbre effect is born of the instrument itself, and which generates an ample, novel and fascinating sonority. With all this, however, one cannot assert that this revival and renewal are exclusively the work of the French composer. Even without harking back to the French composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—that is to say to those *clavecinistes* who have elsewhere been mentioned by me as the true ancestors of contemporary French music and to Mozart (of whom our subject was wont to say: “O, what a pity that Mozart was not a Frenchman! He would then have found more imitators!”)—Debussy had a great master quite near at hand in our own time: Chopin.

It has been stated more than once in what tender affection Debussy held works of the great Pole. He himself (we must remember that he was the pupil of a pupil of Chopin), publicly expressed this potent love of his a number of times, a love which is disclosed, incidentally, in his revisions of Chopin’s works for the firm of Durand. Yet, even if his own confession had not made this clear to us, it would be easy to discover the spirit of Chopin dwelling in the composer of the *Images*, by means of clues often enough revealed in his piano compositions.

Chopin was a poet of the keyboard, and for that very reason he hears all its voices, even those which are most subtle and most

evanescent. He loved to create atmospheres of sound, in which his melodies, so pure and profoundly human in their emotion, move slowly as though through their own natural ambient, the ambient out of which they are created, out of which they are born like perfumed flowers, at the same time giving it, in turn, the imprint of their own firmness. Chopin in his pages has created that right harmonic medium by means of which we are able to discern and understand his winding melodic line; a line at times clear and limpid, as though seen through an immaculate crystal lens, as if appearing against a serene and diaphanous sky; at others as though suffused with mist, veiled in a light wreath of smoke, in a pearly cloud traversed by vivid and irradiant gleams. And this sonorous realization, of such exquisite lyric and coloristic sensibility, is achieved in the most simple, most spontaneous, most fluid manner, one that rouses our admiration on every page. Where Liszt has overemphasized elaboration, as though he were not sufficiently satisfied with his sonal power and structural complexity, where he indulges himself in interlacing part with part, voice with voice, and lumbering across the keyboard in a close, but heavy and resounding gallopade, Chopin has simplified more and more; and has eschewed the page black with notes, clustering on the staves like a pushing crowd at a theatre entrance, to attain a page white and pure, where all that is superfluous, all that does not contribute effectively and necessarily to the expressive expression, is elided. For Liszt and for his followers, the pianoforte was an *end* and virtuosity was an *ideal* of art: for Chopin the instrument was merely the means best adapted for him—since it was the most varied and most ductile—to express the inmost soul of his music, and the height at which he sought to arrive was to create in the spirit of the player and listener a poetic state of being—dramatic and more particularly, lyric—to refine, as much as possible, the stream which discharged his musical speech. And it is for this reason—one of many—that Liszt's piano music is almost always *mechanically* difficult; while that of Chopin, on the contrary, is supremely difficult to interpret; yet not insurmountably nor transcendantly difficult with respect to finger agility, and mechanical dexterity.

A clear proof of this is the difficulty in *fingering* compositions "poorly thought out" for the piano keyboard. Among such compositions are many of the Beethoven sonatas, which literally oppress the phalanges of the executant, not infrequently subjecting them to inhuman and unnatural efforts. In Chopin, on the other hand, "the musical concepts are, to a certain degree, dependent upon and inseparable from the marvellous *manual* possibilities of their author"

(Casella). It is true that Chopin is not easy—although many think that he is, and acting on that supposition too often delight themselves with formless executions of his music—yet by reason of his clear, strictly pianistic manner of writing, he does not call for that strength of wrist and fingers which still makes certain of the Liszt *études*, so to say, a bug-bear to pianists of more than average ability. Only, it is not enough to play Chopin's music; one needs must understand it as well. It is not enough for the hands to disport themselves on the keys: it is necessary for the intellect and, above all, for sensibility and the heart to play their part, which is one of the first importance. And then, when the soul of the composition is quite clear to the player, and he has absorbed it, he may proceed to an artistic execution in a short time. If he does not do this, it is quite probable that he may arrive at playing a Liszt Rhapsody with more or less success; but not even the simplest and shortest of the Chopin *Préludes*.

Now, many of the above observations may be repeated with regard to the piano compositions of Claude Debussy, who nevertheless extends—and at the same time restricts, from the symphonic point of view—the boundaries of the instrument, in common and along parallel lines with the wealth of his means of expression. For him, also, the pianoforte was a most faithful friend, and the guardian of his most profound and cherished secrets; to the piano he confided, within the intimate privacy of his chamber, his sensations of the world of apparitions and actual beings; for it he has written his most personal and his most moving pages. And although he conceived the piano piece as enclosed in the brief ambient of a picture; yet he knew how to give it so much of light and air as to cause it, by reason of its ample sonority and the universality of its pathos, to spread beyond the narrow limits of its frame in a manner that is ideal. He also had an affection for psychic states of being, caught up in their most significant features, and considered in a union more and more sustained and expressive. For this reason, and in order to draw new sonorities from the instrument he, like the Pole, gives the greatest possible measure of extension to his chords, now repeating the tones of the chord several times, at the distance of an octave, now arpeggiating them. And this arpeggio, like that of Chopin, is aerial, light and luminous, while that of Liszt is massive and noisy, and in the majority of cases, inexpressive. This Chopin influence, also betrayed by a number of other more or less significant signs, is more especially visible in the piano compositions preceding the *Préludes*, and may be said to end only with the second book of the *Images*, in which the traces of Debussy's Chopinian passion



grow more feeble, and finally disappear; though not in all the twenty-four pieces contained in that collection. Yet they only disappear as signs, that is to say, tangible and formal indications, and always remain present in the spiritual continuity which these two great masters had in common. And I myself, reading the exalted words which Georges Sand wrote about her pathetic lover, can do no less than think of Claude Debussy: "Chopin's genius is filled to overflowing with sentiment, and with emotions which have never existed in richer variety. He endowed a single instrument with the language of the Infinite; he knew how to sum up, in a few lines, which a child could play, poems of the greatest loftiness, dramas of unequalled energy. Nor did he have to have recourse to extended material means to give the measure of his genius: he did not have to fall back either on the saxophone nor on the ophicleide in order to fill the soul with terror, nor on the church organ to fill it with faith and enthusiasm." With certain limitations, these lines may serve to trace some of the outlines of Debussy's personality.

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In the rapid survey which we are about to make of the piano works of Claude Debussy, we shall have to speak of periods. We might at once say that such subdivisions, proposed and accepted by some for convenience of reference are, nevertheless, without value as criterions in serious critical writing. Such periods are broad time divisions in which to enclose certain characteristic and unchanged features of Debussy's music; but to speak of successive phases of development already constitutes an error where any artist is concerned, and more particularly so when the artist in question is an artist like Debussy. All these fanciful conceits of esthetic criticism are in reality devoid of meaning: the expression of a genuine artistic personality is not subject to a species of perfecting process, though we may speak of an enrichment of means; in other words, of changes in *quantity*—but the intimate essence of the artist's personality simply exists, and does not change in *quality* from the artist's very first *expression* on (I mean *expression* in the sense of Benedetto Croce, the *artistic* realization of an individual intuition: there being no such thing as a *non-artistic expression*). The personality of Debussy is one of those which unfolded in concentric circles, and indeed, one may say that nothing vitally necessary had been forgotten on the road of its unfolding; while at the same time no conquest could have been made which was not, *qualitatively* possible from the very beginning.

There are, in the works of his first youth, not alone hints, but conspicuous gestures and poses which we find again in the works of his maturity (for one, in order to cite a single example, the theme of *Mélisande* may be found in the first measure of the lyric *Nuit d'étoiles*, of the year 1876), just as in his last pages he returns to some of the earlier gestures, which he appeared to have forgotten—compare a few passages of the *Sonate* with some of those in *Quatuor pour cordes*. Yet these are isolated cases: aside from these are a multitude of echoes which repeat themselves again and again, insistently, occasionally in a fleeting manner; yet always in such wise as to establish a cohesion of form and spirit throughout the whole of the master's very considerable creative output. We need only add: that we will always take for granted that chronological references have a merely relative value, since when they are used arbitrarily they serve to build up—as has already been remarked—a sequence, and not a organic coming into being, which is what really takes place in the artist's inward consciousness.

We begin then, with a first, youthful period, which already has the earmarks of original talent, and of a decisive will to escape from the enclosure of romantic form, exhausted and impotent, and incapable of renewing itself. And the light which irradiates the new road comes from the eighteenth century: Couperin, Daquin, Rameau, Costeley, and all the *clavecinistes* who return to earth for the baptism of the first expression of the Debussyan creative gift. Debussy, approaching his art to the echo of the Wagnerian tubas, in the presence of Berlioz's conception, muddy yet a-boil with genius, and in that of the metaphysical Franckian mysticism, could find nothing better to do than to take refuge in the past of the Isle-de-France; and in daily and fraternal communion with the great spirits of the eighteenth century to recreate a style, clean-cut and positively French, yet at the same time modern. And as he was precisely Rameau's successor, all showered their invectives on what they insisted was the offspring of an abnormal sensibility and degenerate sensibility, or of an abstruse and disorganized mentality; all this, of course, in the name of tradition, whose self-appointed paladins they constituted themselves. Few among the intelligent could *then* realize that Debussy, like all real innovators, was moving in the path of the great, the true tradition. (It would be interesting to appose the situation some thirty years ago in the France of Gounod and Massenet, with the more recent and still existing bitterness in our own Puccinian and Mascagnian Italy.)

The first piano numbers by Debussy of which we know, are the two *Arabesques*; but immediately afterward come the *Ballade*,

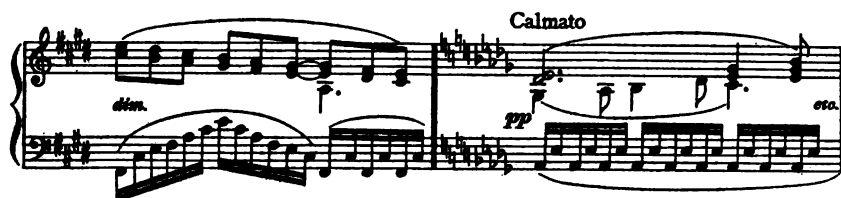
the *Mazurka*, the *Rêverie*, etc., as well as the *Suite Bergamasque* which, however, not having been published until 1905, may have undergone a final revision. I confess my admiration for these compositions though the latter-day Debussyistes have but contempt for them. We find in the four movements of the suite in question so moving a grace, so delicate a sensibility, that we cannot show preference for other pages more interesting, perhaps, yet not more sincere. *Clair de lune*! Here we have, among all the most exquisite utterances that Debussy the man matured wrested out of his genius, the vision of a landscape bathed in moonlight; here we have all the effects, only less simply expressed, which reappear in the *Images* and in the *Préludes*. For example; what an airy flowering of arpeggios ascends the keyboard, to leap up again like a fountain-jet which scatters its water on the air, then relapses into calm again in solemn tonic and dominant undulations, upon which the theme spreads out, ample, sonorous, expressive. And therein lies—and it is what is of import above all else—all the poesy of nature which the musician can voice.

It is of no importance that *today* our admiration of these pieces is shared by those well-meaning critics who relegated them to limbo, because they found in them *melodic* blossomings of five measures, or more.

After ten years, dedicated principally to vocal chamber music, came the suite *Pour le piano*. In connection with it, Debussy's predilection for the old classic forms should be noted—for the French

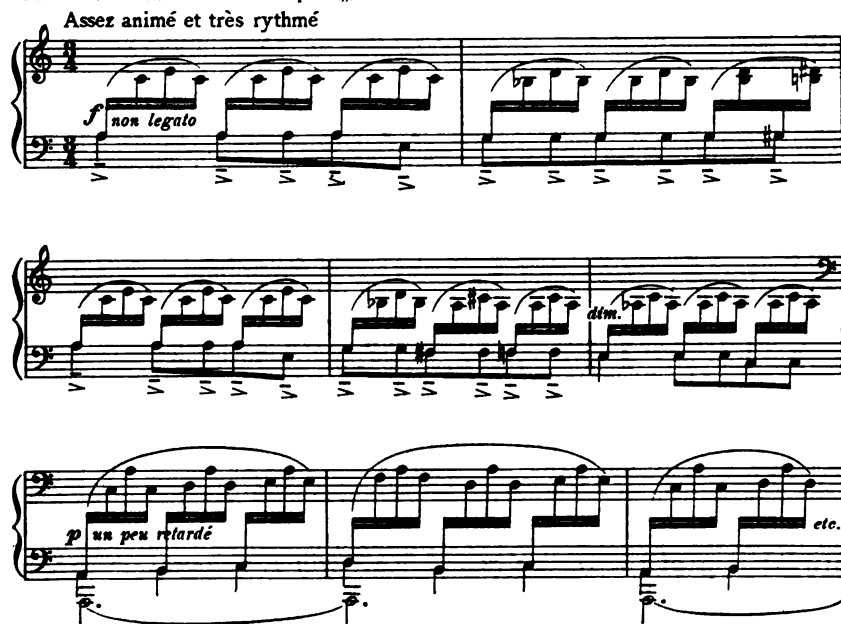
*Clair de lune* (from "Suite bergamasque")—measures 29-42.





*suite*, for the *dances*—in which he has known how to frame his new harmonies, his restless rhythms, and his exquisite modernist spirit, with such elegance and finish. In pages of this kind (we have already mentioned some of them, others we rediscover in the *Childrens' Corner*, in the *Études*), the composer has known how to couple his classicism—intense in the broadest sense of the word—with his modernism, the serious and solemn with the light and brilliant. The *Prélude* with which the suite begins is a conspicuous example. It is built up on two themes: one, rhythmic, vigorous and, if one

*Prélude* (from the suite "Pour le piano," measures 1-8.



wishes, slightly Iberian in character, appearing in the first measures; the other, slow and solemn, confided to the basses (this recalls, likewise in the accompaniment certain Bachian themes, such as that of the organ *Prelude* in A minor). These two themes follow, interweave, fly from each other, and return to bear each other company;

and the most delightful contrast characterizes the actual coexistence of the nobility and majesty of the second theme, and the playful vivacity of the first. The composition ends with a long harp cadenza, light, aerial and coming suddenly, with effect, after the seriousness of a few chords in the form of a chorale. It is the austerity of the cathedral together with the license of the highway: Old Johann Sebastian Bach and that "good sport," Chabrier.

If, in the suite *Pour le piano*, we are still in the *aisthesis* of the compositions thus far discussed—although this work was written after the *Nocturnes* and at the same time as *Pelléas*—the short compositions which follow, in *D'un cahier d'esquisses*, already offer some

*D'un cahier d'esquisses* — mesures 19-21

En animant peu à peu



*L'Isle Joyeuse* — mesures 68-71.

Un peu cédé. Molto rubato



anticipations of the future to which we will have occasion to refer again at various times. This *cahier*, this book, though little known because published outside of France, is sufficiently interesting because it realizes new sonorities, and draws rare and singular effects from the instrument; in the other book, among other things, there appear for the first time those low pedal resonances joined with a rapid play of arpeggios in the high registers, and their sustention of a theme, repeated *pianissimo*, in the interval of an octave.

*D'un cahier d'esquisses — mesure 43.*



The *Estampes* are among the most highly developed compositions which the master has written for the piano. If, in the case of the *Préludes*, one may speak of impressions, in so much as they determine a certain integral moment of intuition, in the *Estampes* we cannot hide from ourselves the loyalty existing to the forms of composition there made manifest, with their well-established boundaries and repetitions. Yet all this thematic and constructive workmanship is overshadowed by a continuous uninterrupted veil of far-away poesy, through which the music is transported into a fantastic world, realized by the musician with the intrinsic magic of sound. The *Estampes*, perhaps, have something of the delicately faded color of ancient copper-plates, in which the transitions of light and shade have been suavely mellowed by the hand of time, and which, when we now rediscover their forgotten sheets, recall none too remote a past with a sense of infinite melancholy and longing. The musician holds us and immerses us in the dream which his own moved soul has visioned in the beginning: in the *Pagodes* evoking a Chinese landscape of vaporous and fascinating unreality; in the *Soirée dans Grenade* intoxicating us with the melancholy ardor of a night of fragrance, upon whose air sound the thousand and one echoes and rhythms of songs and dances; in *Jardins sous la pluie*, leaning against the window-pane to watch the gardens beneath the April rain, a loose and beneficent shower which gives the verdure a shining brilliancy and clarity, and makes all things appear newer and

purser after their heavenly bath. To evoke visions of this kind by means other than those supplied by music is something more than difficult, it is impossible. Music alone—and the music of Debussy is marvellously adapted to the case in point—can give our sensibility those thrills, those slight shocks, those caresses which transmute themselves into visions of the imagination. In these pictures, which are of frequent occurrence in the Debussyian output, there is no attempt to draw the outlines nor to recall anything to our memory by way of onomatopoeia, or to try the application of material or photographic actualities; but instead we have the suggestion which carries them over into a spiritual world, where every line becomes an idea, every color a sentiment, every sound a passion. Nevertheless, the language of Debussy remains absolutely musical. And this because the feelings of the artist himself are absolutely so. Those who have thought to estimate the value of the works of the composer of *Pelléas*, as they would those of an exquisite artist, yet one who is a painter and poet rather than a musician, have advanced the most negligibly valuable supposition which their brains might have originated. They have confused—and this should not surprise us too greatly—the undetermined and unlimited language of sound, with the fixed and established language of their books. For people of this kind there exists a certain musical vocabulary which is far from taking into account the variety and multiplicity of musical speech, and these people, therefore, denounce as faulty and ungrammatical those who are unaware of such limitations, or who know them only to deny them.

Nevertheless, if the *Estampes* really belong to that group of compositions which has called forth the consideration of the critics aforementioned, it is a sign that in their entirety they are still conceived in the spirit of those which have preceded them. Among them we find pages of wonderful breadth and of high poesy (such as the first two pages of the *Pagodes*, for example), as well as pages less happy, and *quasi* conventionalized (such as the last two of the same composition). At bottom, this composition maintains that symmetry which demands a slowly moving episode half-and-half religious in character, intercalated between the brilliant, rather lively movemented *Tempo primo*, and the last section, which is a more or less varied reprise of the first one. Yet with what a sense of breadth, of wide horizons, and with what a variety of life and posture! We need only recall the rhythmic vivacity of the *Soirée dans Grenade*, where the sense of movement is never held down, not even transiently, within stereotype patterns, nor loses itself in inexpressive gaps. We need only think of the *Jardins sous la pluie*, in

which a figuration anything but changeable and varied gives place to pages which are of unattainable sweetness and perfection. The musician has understood the song of the rain which falls upon the leaves and on the ground, he has felt its freshness on his face, and has voluptuously inhaled the perfume of the flowers bedewed by it, and the scent of the humid earth. The driving rain is falling, with gusts of wind and sheeted falls of water. Then it clears up, and drop by drop, the leaves let fall the first notes of an infantile round: *Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés*. . . . Another driving gust of rain, and the childish fugitive round is frightened off, groping, with difficult breathing, for a chance to return. The water runs in rivulets, the rain beats like a tambourine against the window-panes. And then comes the rainbow. . . . Who is there who cannot feel the subtle poesy of the exact detail contained in the last two pages of the composition, the tremulating of the last

*Jardins sous la pluie* (from "*Estampes*,")—mesures 76-79.



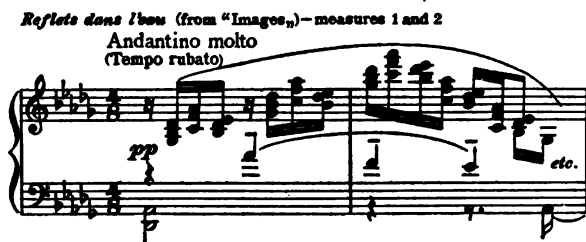
rain-drops, irradiated by the sun, already peering through a gap in the opening clouds, and which in a single stride breaks forth resplendent in the luminous chord of E major?

The *Masques* and *L'Isle joyeuse* seem to belong to an antecedent period: to that of the *Suite bergamasque* rather, than to that of the *Estampes*. They are two brilliant compositions, in which, as is invariably the case, the composer's two instinctive qualities are shown forth—acute sensibility and refined taste; yet in which we find lacking those accents of undeniable originality to be discovered in other works, contemporary or antecedent, such as the *Nocturnes*, already instanced, and the second of the *Fêtes galantes* for the voice. Nevertheless, some of the rhythmic gestures in the *Masques* deserve attention. Of particular interest is the rhythmic effect due to the



fact that the movement is in three-quarter time, while the accentuation is in six-eighth time.

A new step in advance is taken the following year—1905—with the first collection of the *Images*: a short step, for the suite in question is still closely allied to the *Estampes*, with the exception, notwithstanding, of the first *tempo* of *Reflets dans l'eau* which, owing to a certain harmonic coloring, and a tendency to amplify its compositional limits, presages the clarity of the second book of the *Images*. In this piece Debussy depicts a musical landscape: the reflections mirrored in a pool, shifting and changeable, having all the tenuity of tender fancies. There dwells in these pages the feeling of solitude and of revery, expressed in the three notes which are born independently of their chordal tissue, and which repeat without inter-



ruption, while light plays over the entire gamut of their notes, from the sparkling of the sunlight to its evanescence in the evening shadows. And they return, these three notes, now that night has come, "in distant and harmonious sonority." The last page of *Reflets dans l'eau* is worthy of a very great poet. Of the other two movements, the *Hommage à Rameau* stands for a tribute of devotion to this great man of the eighteenth century, whom Debussy helped to rescue from undeserved neglect. (Of such "homages," Debussy wrote only one other, for Haydn, a brief little occasional number, without any particular pretensions.) *Mouvement* represents the pleasure taken by the superbly skilled artificer in the combination of innumerable triplets with a brief and untamed theme, and in his drawing from them every possible effect.

With the second book of the *Images* we already enter upon a new period of Debussy's art: that which has been called its third period—of which his symphonic suite *La Mer* rings the magnificent annunciatory chimes. This period may be summed up in a single word—but one to be understood in a certain definite sense—the word "melodic." The harmonic sensibility predominating in the *Nocturnes* and in the *Estampes* gives way in the second book of the *Images* to an affirmation of the melodic line which is no less

sensitive. We say *melodic*, since the word does not mean a *specified quality* of melody, but all melody, melody in general, the song which finds its expression in a firm, monodic and essential line. And a line of this sort—which may be filiform, thread-like, or built up of small successive masses, established the character of the composition—constitutes its real substance, and its living and moving frame-work.

This difference in attitude in the field of music—first disclosed in Debussy—finds its analogies in painting and in literature, in which it arrives, nevertheless, as always, a step in advance. Symbolism and impressionism are no longer the only concepts which divide the field of esthetics; it is beginning to be admitted that art has become an instrument of marvellous delicacy; yet that presently, it must and will have to have recourse to something more definite, more exact. In painting, Gauguin subdues nature with the authority of his figures, void of detail, and of his colors whose harmony is all the richer after their gradations have been removed. The artist regains his right of straightforwardness of interpretation: Matisse, Cézanne, Picasso, Braque, join themselves to Gauguin. Literature wishes to eliminate from poetry above all what pertains to the history of some individual consciousness, and instead preserve all that which shows itself to be a legacy of life in general. Mallarmé passes on, and in his place appear new idols: Claudel, Peguy, Rolland, Suarès, Bertrand, etc. In music all this is translated into an affirmation of greater definiteness and of greater solidarity; and in addition, in a new conception of sentiment which turns toward a multiplicity more vast and simple. Debussy's art no longer wishes to be an art of langour, which might be defined, *ante litteram*, by Verlaine's celebrated stanza, than which no other better express its emotion:

Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence,  
qui regard passer les grands Barbares blancs,  
en composant des acrostiches indolents  
d'un style d'or où la lueur du soleil danse.

(I am the Empire which, in decadence spent,  
Watches the huge, white Barbarian advance;  
While writing acrostiches indolent  
In golden style, where the sun's languors dance.)

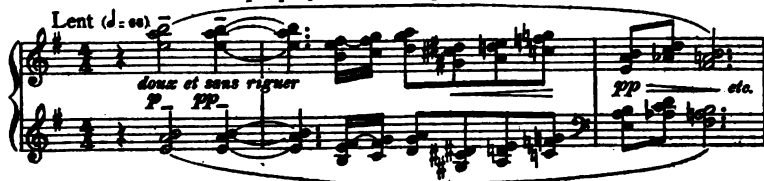
The humanitarian crisis which the musician traversed during this period finds its apogee in the first book of the *Préludes*, and in the *Iberia*, in which the *human* values are of absolute, if not exclusive, importance. Yet emotion is always restrained within certain limits not established by the composer's will, but insisted upon by the expressive contents themselves. And nevertheless, there is not a

note, not an effect, not a sentiment that is obscure in it. All is expressed with so great a humility, with so chaste a modesty (or, rather, in the spirit of that famous saying, "take eloquence and wring its neck!") that it seems as though it were the passionately trembling evocation of our own inmost being. In not any one of its moments does this music of Debussy's surprise us; in any one of life's hours, listening to it, we can yield ourselves up to it, interiorly, allow ourselves to be cradled upon its waves with confidence and joy. We do not understand, therefore, why the emotion which vibrates in the first movement of the *Sonata quasi una fantasia* should be considered *potentially human*, and that which is born of the miraculous reëvocation of the *Temps qui fuit*, illumined by the rays of a pallid moon, should not. A vast, sleeping country-side, a moon which at times peeps through the clouds which crown the skies, and at others irradiates the simulacrum of that which has been (a temple? the temple of our faith, the tomb of our love, with all the softness of our smiles, and whose recollection brings the tears of home-sickness to our eyes?) There are alternations of diaphanous clarity, and of deep and awesome obscurity; a forest crowded with allurements, full of attraction and mystery. And above this landscape a voice—our *own* voice—which sings intimately. Beethoven makes his melody proceed out of an arpeggio in triplets in the suave tonality of C sharp minor; and Debussy gives shape to his lunar atmosphere with its song. And it is more than a melodic line, it is a figure in full, in which the musician, a sculptor in tones, has condensed all the vanishing life round about, in which he has enclosed all the radiance, and all the meaning of the surrounding landscape, and is the incontestible master of the scene. In the second one of the *Images*—in particular the one of which we have spoken, and in the *Cloches à travers les feuilles*—we find realized for the first time that intimate, creative process of the *suggestions* of the picture, anent which so much has been said. Debussy does not wish to describe a picture in its actuality; with the musical realism of Wagner— notwithstanding that in the *Trilogy* there already are discoverable inkings of new expressional evocations—Debussy has sought to translate, to carry over into music the musicality *expressed* by the natural landscape, by means of tonal reproductions. For example, a character piece, let us say one that is slow and religious, becomes a mountain impression if at times we *feel* the chime of bells ringing through it; or a shepherd's melody intoned on a rustic pipe gives a page of pastoral character. And the latter, when written in certain traditional rhythms definitely regarded as bucolic in style, becomes a woodland sketch, no sooner has the composer uttered a bird-cry, or

caused the brooklet to murmur in triplets, or flow in arpeggios; and thus it goes. This reëvocation proceeds, therefore, out of the exterior and the extrinsic, inasmuch as there may be mountains without bells or shepherds, and woods without brooklets. Debussy, on the contrary, wishes to express the inner, intimate musicality, the *inexpressed* music of things; that aspect of them which is capable of transforming itself in the inwardness of a musical being in musical expression; to present auditive sensations, musical rather than visible. Suggestion takes the place of illustration. The things which he hears and sees are those for which it is impossible to find a definite musical form (that is to say a *formula*); yet the non-acoustic phenomena of nature make so decisively a musical impression on him, that its expression irresistibly brings us into direct contact with the phenomenon itself, with its outward appearance. (In this connection I should mention that it is not even possible to affirm to what degree Debussy's last compositions, the *Préludes* in particular, really contribute to illustrate their respective titles. Their composer was so conscious of this fact that, in effect, in some of the pages he has placed the title after the composition, as though to leave the question of the precedence of the visual impression upon his auditor, or the contrary, quite open.)

From the standpoint of musical expressiveness in itself, the second book of *Images* gives evidence of far more simplicity than the first, be it by reason of the stripping off of unnecessary elements, be it because of a condensation of substance in phrase and harmony. This trend toward simplicity is the sign of the artist's maturity. A certain excessive thickness of writing, which we rediscover here and there in the *Estampes*, and in the first book of the *Images*, disappears in this second book; in which, however, the composer takes pleasure, at times, in certain gestures of his own, personal if one wishes; yet which end by becoming stereotype (we notice some such, which from being no more than passing, hardly stressed, have grown more frequent and disadvantageous, more pattern-like). Such are, for example, those contained in the first measures of *Et la lune descend* . . . a progression of chordial blocks to give a sense of mystery and, so to say, of *immobile movement*; the appoggiatura in thirds,

*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* (from "Images II.")—measures 1-8.



whose employ is discreetly abused, from the *Poissons d'or* to Debussy's very last numbers, and the insistence on the whole-tone scale which in the *Cloches à travers les feuilles* ends by causing a certain monotony. Yet, on the other hand, the harmonic unity of the composition shows itself in all its perfection. We have elsewhere said that Debussy found a species of music which develops itself, conceived in its own measure, in such wise that it becomes necessary to seek in the beats which follow, the meaning hidden in the preceding ones. Yet at other times he has written pages in which, as it were, the music is confined to the moment; in which not alone the individual chord, but each individual note as well, seems to be vitalized with the most intense life.

This condensation must of necessity lead the French composer away from the more spacious and complex forms, and conduct him toward the composition which is brief and succinct: in the *Isle joyeuse*, looking across the *Images*, we almost attain the synthetic expressiveness of the *Préludes*. To simplify and to condense, such was the constant preoccupation of Claude Debussy (we observe it in his pianoforte compositions, but it also exists—though somewhat less evidently—in those for orchestra: Compare *La mer* with *San Sebastino*). On the eve of the war he wrote to a friend: "The further I progress, the more I detest that intentional disorder which is no more than a means of tricking the ear, consisting only of odd and entertaining harmonies which are merely society amusements. . . . Whatever happens, we must first find, then suppress, in order to reach the living heart of emotion!" It is the speech of a master artist, whose soul knows the incessant and dolorous labor of creation, and the anxiety of finding the expression which will reveal it in its every vibration.

In his twenty-four *Préludes*, and especially in the first twelve, Debussy has given us his master-work in pianoforte composition.

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Before this, however, aside from the two brief pages of the *Hommage à Haydn* and the waltz *La plus que lente*, we have a short parenthesis, dedicated to childhood or, better said, inspired by child life: the collection known as *The Children's Corner* and the *Boîte à joujoux* (this last, in fact, actually appeared three years after the *Préludes*; but because of its kinship to *The Children's Corner*, we doubt that it was written later).

Debussy was a great lover of children; he had but one child of his own, lively and graceful, who was his whole joy. For his

"Chouchou" he would drop any work upon which he might be engaged, to amuse himself with this baby of his (poor "Chouchou," she has rejoined her father in the realm of disembodied spirits!), for her he would have given up the conversation of all of his great colleagues. He was one who remained to the very last—as an artist who was on terms of brotherly affection with him has related—"a genuine big child. "That same marvellous innocency and clarity of sentiment which is the fundamental characteristic of his art, showed itself in his every gesture, in his every word. At the age of fifty he still took great pleasure in his baby, in handling and playing with her as a mother might." This, which might present the appearance of a vague form of senility, was instead no more than the expansiveness of his clear and limpid soul, to which things still presented themselves in the same forms, and were productive of the same sensations which they might have given a babe. He realized in the most perfect manner those anti-intellectualist esthetics of mystic origin, which have brought forth Claudel, Barrès, and Suarès, and which have achieved their philosophic apogee in Bergson's work. The latter says in one of his pages (*La Perception du changement*):

There exists at least one class of these privileged beings, who move in an ambient of *pure perceptiveness*, which is, in the pure feeling or sensitiveness to things, untouched by the intellect, and they are artists. These care only about extending their perceptions, without seeking to rise above them . . .

Art, in a word, must show them things as they actually are, and not in the misformations wrought by the intellect. Now no art has a more emotional origin than that of Debussy: in no music does the intellect play a more secondary rôle than it has played in Debussy's music. It is *childlike* then, an art like this, when we take into consideration that with the child, sensations and perceptions predominate over idea and representation. It is childlike, also, inasmuch as it looks upon the appearance of things and the birth of phenomena with the eyes of stupefaction; inasmuch as it thinks that all is novel and miraculous, and that man, in giving names to things, and tabulating in the form of definite conceptions spiritual and physical attainments, only destroys poetry and beauty. Indeed: the art which draws its inspiration from these esthetic principles—mystic or spiritistic, if one chooses to call them so—denies the isolation of things, and thereby their very self-determination; it precludes the possibility of things being recognized and comprehended in themselves alone, ringed with some definite sign which is built-up around them like a preserving barrier. The indistinct—the *idea of the unordered*, as Bergson calls it in his *Evolution créatrice*—is not regarded

as a negation of the definite, but by itself alone, as a positive value. It is precisely the application of these esthetic principles in the field of figurative impressionism, that gave birth to the paintings of the ultra-moderns; and there is more than one example of it to be found in Debussy's music.

All that has been said by way of digression is put forth to make clear that this attitude of sympathy on the part of the French musician for little children and child-life, as the result of a consciousness of an art particularly directed to their sensibilities, makes it easier to understand its esthetics, as displaying a natural trend toward the intimate.

The "Children's Corner" is a suite of six pieces, of modest dimensions, in some of which another aspect of the composer's sensibility is revealed; namely that which seizes upon the grotesque in men and in things, and exercises its irony upon them, not in a caustic, yet in a sharp and pungent manner. The *Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum* is a caricature of the vain scientific inflexibility of the compilers of studies and methods and, in a broader way, a satire upon the whole world of professors and those "strong in their subject." The arrow flies straight to the mark and hits the majority of the German musicians, the contemporaries of the guild, mathematicians and scientists of musical art, whose sensitiveness is slightly pachydermatous; like that of the poor elephant *Jumbo*, perhaps, who follows immediately after, and who suddenly falls placidly asleep, lulled like a good *bourgeois* by a saccharine cradle-song; for the proximity of the two pieces is not without its significance. Yet all the composer's capacity for irony or satire—which, nevertheless, must be regarded as an intellectual matter—seems for the moment exhausted, and does not reappear until we reach the last piece of the collection *Golliwog's Cakewalk*, where it is camouflaged in the form of a dance, and supplies a practical reason for a conclusion. Debussy is quite the reverse in his *Sérénade à la poupée*, in his *La neige danse*, and in his *Petit berger*, in which his heart is a-quiver with homesick emotion, and finds accents of miraculously lyric quality. To speak of the stylistic perfection of these pages is no hyperbole: the beauty of the compositions is revealed in their harmonic entirety, in the balance of their episodes, in the delicacy of their detail.

Never, perhaps, did Debussy combine in fixed forms, such as those of the "Children's Corner," a greater lucidity of expression with a feeling so full of humanity and of tenderness. Certain touches in the *Sérénade* (in particular that in which the passionate phrase is entrusted to the left hand) are characterized by a movement

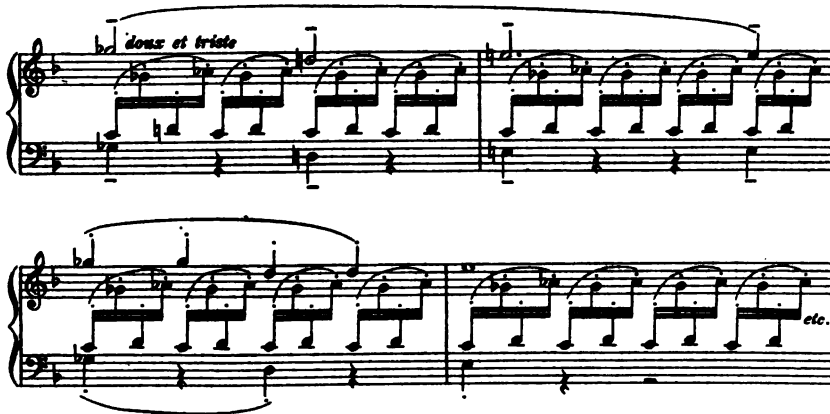
at once vivid and sincere which, perhaps—such vivacity and

*Sérénade à la poupée* (from "Children's Corner")—measures 45-52  
Allegretto ma non troppo



such sincerity—the composer will not be fated to find again. "The Snow is Dancing" is the precursor of the subtle poesy of the *Préludes*, and the latter's evocative power; while at the same time it is able to speak with a voice that appeals to the heart (notice the repeated theme, which emerges from the swirling extravagance of the innocent snowflakes).

*La neige danse* (from "Children's Corner")—measures 23-26.  
Modérément animé



The *Petit berger* is written with a simplicity and purity which make us think of the elocution of the second number of the *Fêtes galantes*. All together, the six numbers of the collection once more affirm the composer's tendency to ever further clarify expression, to ever further simplify the language of tone, making no more



concessions to technical virtuosity or to the instrumental executant, something we have already had occasion to accentuate and which, before long, we will find realized in full. The ballet *La boîte à joujoux* came to the composer's mind as a result of the celebrated performances of Serge Diaghileff's "Russian Ballet" at the *Châtelet*, which took place in 1911; and it undoubtedly reflects the influence of these compositions, in particular, and in quite a special way that of Stravinsky's *Petrouschka*. This last remark, however, refers rather to the *tout ensemble* of the inspiration, to its scenic plot and the disposition of its parts, than to the quality of its music which, as may be imagined, is different enough from that of Stravinsky. Yet, even in his conception of the ballet, Debussy was somewhat at variance with the Russian spirit. At bottom of the burlesque scenes of *Petrouschka*, there is something indescribable of bitterness and tragedy, transcending the boundaries of the comic—though the scene *quasi* be played by wooden marionettes—and which invests them with a symbolic significance altogether human. The magic of the Charlatan, so the author informs us, has communicated to the rest, to the marionettes, to *Petrouschka*, to the Ballerina, to the Moor, all the feelings and passions of human beings. In the *Boîte à joujoux*, on the other hand, we have genuine wooden marionettes, in whom, at the most, a somewhat awkward tenderness serves to indicate their human quality. Andre Hellé's argument, however, infantile in form, is delicious by reason of its poesy:

This story happened in a box of toys. Boxes of toys, are, in fact, kinds of cities, in which the toys live just like people. Or rather, perhaps, cities are only boxes of toys in which the people live like playthings. The dolls dance: a soldier sees one of them, and falls in love with her; but the doll has already given away her heart to an idle, frivolous and quarrelsome clown. Then the soldiers and the clowns have a great battle with each other, in the course of which the poor little wooden soldier is grievously wounded. Abandoned by the villainous clown, the doll takes in the soldier and loves him. They marry, are happy and have numerous children. The frivolous clown becomes a village constable—and life goes right on in the box of toys.

Here we have all that there is in Debussy of sensibility; of subtle tenderness and humor, and delicate sentiments, for whose intimate expression the composer decided the piano would suffice, and in consequence of which the ballet takes its course with no more than a pianoforte annotation. (Later, André Caplet orchestrated the piano score, and in this new dress it was recently presented at the *Théâtre Lyrique*.) It is a little jewel: the silhouettes of the elephant, of the negro, of the policeman, are drawn with restraint; yet

incisively and conclusively drawn; the effeminate sweetness of the *bambola* is all contained in that sinuous and extraordinarily common-

*La boîte à joujoux* (Danse de la poupée).

Doux, gracieux et souple



place waltz and the proud vacancy of the English soldier in that march which well-nigh recalls *The Golliwog's Cakewalk*. (We might

*La boîte à joujoux* (Le soldat Anglais).

Mouv't de Marche modéré



mention in passing that this frequently recurs in characteristically English subjects—landscape and figure subjects—and is one of the characteristics not neglected by the French artists of Verlaine's period. England, a land of fogs and of pale suns, seemed to them to be the background best adapted for their dreams, and their indeterminate nostalgia. And this is another point of contact between musicians and poets who were brethren: it is the pre-Raphaelite England of the *Demoiselle élue*, of "The Blessed Damsel"; the Verlanian England of *Green*; the Shakespearean England of Puck, and of his sisters, the Fates; the Turneresque England of the *Brouillards*; the humorous and funambulist England of *Pickwick, Esq.*, of *General Lavine*, of the *Minstrels*.)

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The four-and-twenty *Préludes* (twenty-four: the perfect number where Preludes are concerned, from Bach to Chopin and Scriabin, no matter how they may compare as regards their tonal specifications), were printed in two books, each containing twelve, in 1910 and 1913 respectively; yet we may take for granted that they were written without interruption in the years from 1909 to 1913, according to information supplied by the composer's friends. In the first twelve, little by little, Debussy, as he goes, abandons by the roadside the last traces of any personality save his own—in particular as regards their instrumental dress—and creates for himself a musical-pianistic language which is truly his personal possession. He reduces his compositions, so far as length is concerned, within more modest limits, henceforth does away with all *repeats*, and with episodes not called for by inspiration, but merely by the symmetry of parts. He frees himself from all restraint, and is able to express himself in full, recounting his impressions in a manner at once strong and synthetic. Each of the *Préludes*—a title only too unfitting to express the informing spirit of these compositions—is a picture in itself, matured in its every portion, and expressing a special musical condition of being on the part of the artist. His impressions come to him from every side: from visions of the country, from recollections of distant lands, from poetic and literary reactions, from the figures of plastic art: in the very centre of his extraordinarily vivid life, he sees and listens; and this is how these translations into music are generated within his inner self, and thus come to signify to him the true meaning and conduct of his art. It is a collection of sensations illimitable as regards space and time, and which are all equally a legacy on the part of the composer's decisive personality.

When he began to write them Debussy was already master of his characteristic mode of expression to such a degree that he could dispense with his favorite patterns. The variety of his musical gestures, and the multiplicity of his sensations allowed him, to use on the one hand the whole-tone scale, even to the extent of building up a whole prelude on it (as in *Voiles*, where the only exceptions are the six measures, *en animant*, and the little chromatic fragment in measure 31a), and elsewhere, to stick to the most orthodox of harmonies, the most permissible tonal observances and modulations (as, for example, in the delightful *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, informed with so straightforward and moving a poesy). Yet, even where he employed traditional means, Debussy knew how to infuse them with novel feeling. Certain of the *Préludes*, when we come to examine them, after having been fascinated by their sonority, leave us somewhat disillusioned, and at the same time

filled with admiration for their simplicity, their transparent clearness, and the unveiled nudity of their technical construction. All, or nearly all, are built up on one or two themes, linear and self-contained, with little modulation, and with hardly any embellishment; nor episodes either, if by episode we understand, as usual, something which enters to interrupt the course of the principal idea. The whole of the prelude *Des pas sur la neige* (What sad things they say to each other, those footsteps which lose themselves in the snow!) may be said to have been born of a single theme, which from time to time is

.. *Des pas sur la neige* (from "Préludes," I)—mesures 2-4.



emphasized by a desperate invocation, and after which there resound "tender plaints," to die away slowly against the sonorous background of an equalized design, one balanced without closing afterbeats, which gives us the feeling of the naked, snowy countryside, where all things have lost their shape, and noises have no echo. Elsewhere Debussy gives us the impression of the even sweep of the furious wind, without having recourse to the venerable chromatic scale, the passages played with great finger-power up and down the keyboard, without trills or arpeggios. How? By means of a design of the greatest simplicity, which is neither more nor less than the minor second. Thus it is that "the wind in the plain" wails and

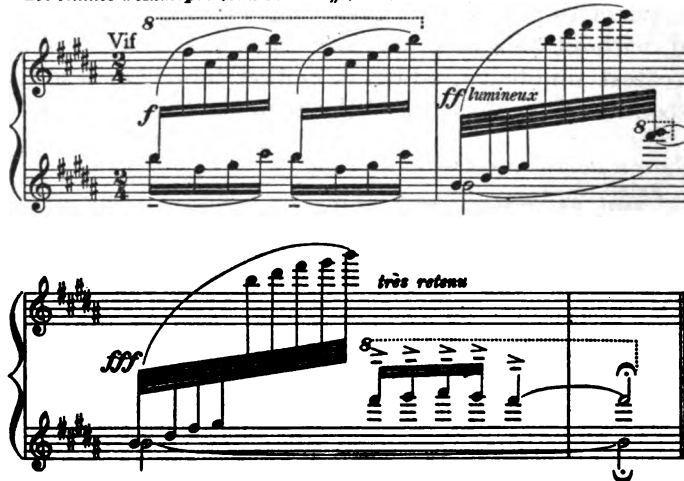
... *Le vent dans la plaine* (from "Préludes," I)—mesure 1.



ululates, and we feel all the tragic poesy of this invisible and omnipresent force. Elsewhere the composer's sensitiveness is, so-to-speak, divided, cut in two: in *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir*—as one of our musicians, who is a pure and acute interpreter of Debussy has remarked—two distinct conceptions may be

noted in more than one passage (the first measures, for instance), in which the elements contained in the two principal lines express, so-to-say, the tone-poet's human feeling, that of "his tender heart, which abominates the vast blackness of nothingness"; and the mystic atmosphere of evening and the skies, "sad and lovely, like a great open-air altar." The prelude has no development, but is a succession of ideas and of fragments, a multiplicity of vague and indistinct harmonies and colors, among which one can hear emerge at times the voice of a violin which trembles "like a heart afflicted." And from the harmonies of this page, so rare, so tormenting in their voluptu—truly Baudelarian in their partcolored exquisiteness—we come to those which follow, clear, open and meridional, of *Les collines d'Anacapri*, luminous with the radiance of the key of B major. Debussy wished them not only to obey the laws of diatonic harmony, but also those of time-hallowed form, and the whole composition is rigidly constructed as regards its themes, with its frank coda and its frank intermezzo, *moderato*, without showing any signs of the monotonous or commonplace, owing to the variety of colors and designs, of contrapuntal details so informed with good taste, and whose equal it would be hard to find. For all this we need only refer to the detail of measure 81, and the measures following, where the popular folk-tune theme is handled contrapuntally with the descending scale of the key, and in the reprise of the last five measures, which form such a luminous close. Then there is the vast open-air

*Les collines d'Anacapri* (from "Préludes, I")—final measures



canvas of *La Cathédrale engloutie* and that of *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest*. Debussy's music has an extraordinary affinity with the

spirit of water: it has mobility, transparency, a rapid shifting of colors and reflections: the magic empire of Debussyan musicality is surrounded and, so to say, immersed in the fluid element. Water slumbers lightly in the grot, or flows laughing from the hollow of loving hands from which the snow does not dissolve (*Le promenoir des amants*); its agile jet sighs upward toward the blue (*Soupir*), or falls back in a liquid, flowered medley like a rain of tears (*Le jet d'eau*); the heart weeps when "it rains on the town." The water sings with the voice of the *Sirènes*, and from sea to sea one views the horizon widening to end in the infinity of the oceaned freshness of *La mer*.

And let us note the legend of the *Cathédrale engloutie*. The fishermen of Brittany believe that they can behold, emerging from the waves at dawn, the legendary city of Ys, buried for centuries at the bottom of the sea. Yet the musician gives us no more than the suggestion of this definite vision: a suggestion that is the very intensity of the emotion which the poesy of the legend has called forth in his soul. Whether or no there be bells is a matter of slight importance: the scene has no realistic value. But what no one will fail to experience in this simple composition—altogether developed along a fragment consisting of three notes, D, E, and B—is the sense of the sea's infinite mystery which it diffuses, the feeling of the grandeur of this aqueous plain, and finally, a sense of eternity which cannot be put into words, in whose presence one is overcome by a sentiment of humility and devotion. What more effective impression of eternity exists than that given in the last page of the *Prélude* where, upon a muted undulation of eighth-notes, an octave lower, gravitating about the tonic note, rises the harmonic theme, in *liquid* chords which move with all the solemnity of officiating priests? The sea, lashed by the east wind, no longer shows a tranquil surface, but becomes a battle-field: halcyon birds and storm-petrels pierce the air, like arrows, and the wind ululates and quivers; all nature is in a tumult. Yet the musician still remains within the pianoforte ambient, although occasionally the orchestra makes itself felt for the first time, in the exuberance of his colors and the complexity of his vocal web.

*La Cathédrale engloutie* (from *Préludes*, I) — mesures 72-75.





This first book of the *Préludes*, we note, opens with a number that is candid with Hellenic serenity, one which may be compared to a Parthenonian bas-relief. They pass lightly by, hardly touching the earth with their bare feet, the *Danseuses de Delphes* (a simple line, rising over melodies strictly written in the scale tonality, with hardly any modulation). Their dance is a rite: the dancers are imbued with the spirit of Apollo, and the gestures of their arms, and the movements of their bodies flower into the attainment of sheer beauty. Not a gesture rising out of the figuration, not a motion, breaks the rhythm of their sacrifice. What a contrast to the *Danse de Puck*! Puck, the burlesque spirit of the Shakespearean "Dream," is—a little—the ironic sprite in the composer's soul, for Puck appears to some extent in all his amiable musical caricatures, in which, nevertheless, he is a good fellow and never really succeeds in enraging his victims. This dance of his is all a bit of embroidery; as regards the elegance with which it is written, an elegance of which it is one of the collection's most notable examples, and also, because of its variety of mood: its playfulness, its burlesque note, its sentimentality, hypocritical seriousness, and above all, its lightness, lightness, lightness. Ah, what a divine gift is this lightness of Debussy's which he never loses, from his first to his very last work!

The second book of the *Préludes*, though, as regards expressive richness and perfection of means, it represents an advance on the first book, seems inferior to it in its emotional contents. When he reached his thirteenth *Prélude*, Debussy's soul appears to have turned away—more or less—from any human subject: as though his soul no longer vibrated save in response to the refinements and delicacies of artifice.

One need only turn over the pages of the book in order to be convinced of this fact. First of all, the titles of these compositions in themselves are such as to show that their inspiration, the motive of their composition, has, in most cases, an intellectual origin. Debussy wished to write these *Préludes* of his second book, but did not *feel* them intimately and driven by necessity, as he did those of the first. *La Puerta del Vino*, *General Lavine*, *Hommage à S.*

*Pickwick, Esq., Les tièrces alternées, Feux d'artifice*, are so many little jewels, considered as extrinsic music; yet they no longer give us those sensations of life and poesy which *Voiles* and *Des pas sur la neige* awake in us. We feel that the composer is always ready to sing about what he likes, indeed, to sing merely for his own pleasure. A species of *blasé* humor stops him in the midst of his enthusiasm, and in his yielding to the promptings of inspiration. He may show himself in a free and dazzling guise; but his grip is no longer firm. We have the impression as of something faded, spoiled by caresses, even confused. Hence the character of his emotion, which, if it be not superficial, is at any rate peripheral, and in a measure no more than epidermic, skin-deep.

And beside, from the pianistic point of view, these pieces no longer possess that expressiveness restrained within the instrument's established limits of sonority. Some among them even decidedly overpass these limits, in endeavoring to give the piano orchestral volume of tone (one may note, incidentally, that these are in nearly every case written upon three staves, which is not an indication of a movement toward more perfect pianist elaboration, but rather denotes a trend in the direction of expansion, something like intolerance of the keyboard's limitations). At times the effect is more one of groping for what he is in search of than finding it. Certain sonorities, for instance, in the *Feux d'artifice*, look better on the printed page than they sound at the keyboard.

At other times some heterogeneous element, some episode—and here, indeed, we may use that term in its customary sense—obtrude themselves in the development of the composition, which are neither beautiful in themselves, nor homogeneous and “at ease” with the context as, for example, in measures 20-24 of *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*.

In fact, it seems at times as though Debussy had run short of thoughts, and were satisfied, for this binding reason, to work over, though always with good taste, elements and phrases which he had given their most vital expression in other pages. More significant in this respect than any of the others is the prelude *Canopé*, which

*Canopé* (from “*Preludes*, II)—measures 1-6.

Très calme et doucement triste





clearly betrays the anthology of the Debussyan formula:

*Cenope* (from "Preludes," II) — measures 13-16.



from the first to the last measures (see measures 1-4, 13-15, 24-25 and others). The melodic progressions of the initial harmonies of the prelude in question may be found with but slight rhythmic variants, in the *Feuilles mortes*, measures 8-9.

Yet now, the worst having been said, and the necessary reservations made, we hasten to add that in this second collection, however, there are pearls of price; and among them, in first instance, we would place *Ondine*. This prelude gives evidence of an exquisiteness of harmonic elaboration which Debussy, perhaps, does not achieve elsewhere: its swiftness and elegance of idiom are only exceeded by the grace of its melodic line, and the mother-of-pearl iridescence of its harmonic web. The composer has caressed with a lover's hand this magnificent marine creature, so full of living movement, dripping water and with a smile like a sunbeam. *Bruyères* has been conceived in the same vein as *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, but with a greater wealth of emphasis. It also has a sweet and delicate theme of afflicted tenderness, comprising but a few lines, with brief plaints and fragments which join, part from and appeal one to the other. The whole piece breathes an atmosphere of candor and innocence. Debussy knows the language of its simple soul: it seems as though the angels and the *fillettes* with linen caps are the only ones who can speak it; and in it he puts the whole heart, all that there is of passion and of memories.

Two other masterly pieces, humorous this time, are *General Lavine*, "excentric," and *Hommage à Pickwick*. The first is no more than a cakewalk—with a few short parentheses—but it is a cakewalk written by Claude Debussy, who knows how to endow the most commonplace things with grace and refinement. We need but recall for a moment what a relish the very ordinary guitar accompaniment into which the theme of the grotesque insinuates itself, has received at his hands. In *Pickwick* the English character-sketch is still more

of a success; the seriousness, at times ridiculous, of Albion's sons is here depicted in an insuperable manner. Suddenly, after the solemn theme of the English national hymn, which lends itself so readily to the forming of an admirable frame-work for choral harmonies, there darts forth the leaping design with appoggiaturas, which give shape to the whole composition, and which above all is characteristic of English dances. And after it reenters the solemn theme, making a contrast full of relish and humor. This is in truth the Samuel Pickwick of Dickens's immortal portrait, down to a

*Hommage à S. Pickwick Bag.* (from "Préludes," II) measures 15 and 16

(Grave) Peu à peu animé



species of little whistle which he utters, so to say, in the background, before withdrawing.

\* \* \*

In the year which succeeded the publication of the second book of the *Préludes*, the war began. Terrible, during its first months, for every French heart; ruin swept across the most smiling provinces of France and a frenzy of violence and of destruction seemed to have turned man into a beast. Art quite suddenly seemed to be a far-away and useless thing, to which it seemed no one could continue to listen; those among the artists who went away were, perhaps, happier than those who remained, stunned and inert amid the rising and falling tides of enthusiasm and dejection which alternated, turn and turn about. Debussy did not rally from the blow; his own rising fever notably increased by the universal rise in temperature, his illness, from that time on, manifested itself in all its inexorable violence. No more soft, sweet evenings during which, in his little study in the *Avenue du Bois*, he could catch the echoes of a serene and carefree life, echoes of songs and dances, and of serenades; but instead the vertiginous phantasmagoria of arms and of armed men, the commands of "Forward, march!", the howling

of the mob cursing the enemy, and working itself up into an exaltation of patriotic valor, religion, humanity. And Debussy for a time is silent. The musician of eighteenth century France, imbued with its delicate refinement of spirit, cannot well be the musician of the *révanche* and the *Sambre et Meuse*. The subtle music of Verlaine and Mallarmé is succeeded by the tumultuous and militaristic music of Paul Deroulède, and the empty and resounding music of Edmond Rostand. Since Debussy's sentience had not been touched by the dramatic impetus of romanticism, and a feeling for the heroic and epic was foreign to his nature, he did not thrill to the national drama which developed day by day (I am speaking, be it clearly understood, of the composer's *esthetic*, not of his moral sentience; for Debussy was a good citizen and a zealous Frenchman). "He belonged to that tribe of artists," says Laloy, "whose art can produce only love, nothing else, and which ignores hatred, dispute, violence and vulgarity. Among the musicians he recalls Mozart in particular, owing to a like dispensation of innocency and charity; both possessed the power of investing all that they touched with a limpid serenity, whence their thought progresses toward peacefulness and joy."

Hence there was missing for his *aisthesis* those sensations which he drew, so to speak, from the atmosphere which surrounded him, those things which he saw within the immediacy of his daily perceptions. He sought to attune himself to this new life; and in the three *Sonatas* for different instruments there is, in fact, more than one tentative toward a broadening out and renewing of substance which opened up to him new roads of expression. He sensed, whether confusedly or clearly we cannot say, that he had exhausted all the possibilities of the trend in which he was the supreme leader; but a considerable space of time was needed to allow the vision which had come to him to mature and express itself in works as perfect as those which had signalized the apogee of his preceding output. The compositions of the last three years of the French master's life—I am speaking, naturally, of his pianoforte works, but might also refer to the pages for viola, flute, violin, etc., already cited—with the exception, perhaps, of the *Études*, are weak, either because they are built up out of material largely barren in itself, and not capable of a new vital deploy of strength, or because manifestly elements of a new *aisthesis* not as yet well proportioned, and at any rate, not always in homogeneous accord with other predominating components. These compositions are: the *Épigraphes antiques*, the *Berceuse héroïque*, the twelve *Études* and *En blanc et noir*.

Furthermore, Debussy moves sensibly toward a change in his pianistic style, which reached its highest degree of perfection in the second book of *Images*, and in the first book of the *Préludes*. From the three staves mentioned we pass to *four-hand* pieces and to such for *two pianos*. In his mania for increasing the sonority of his pianistic elaboration, the composer does not see that he is entering upon the wrong road, one which will no longer lead him to purity but to contamination.

In the six bas-reliefs which Debussy has entitled *Épigraphes*, he comes near to renewing the stylistic perfection which is the beauty of the *Chansons de Bilitis*. These six pieces are closely connected in unity of inspiration and affinity of conception; in addition, the composer wishes us to realize this solidarity, for at the conclusion of the work, he once more calls up the theme with which it began. And yet, regarding the *Six épigraphes antiques*, we must repeat what has already been said with respect to the second book of the *Préludes*: Debussy makes use of all his *clichés*, his patterns—for this is what some of his individual “ways of putting things” have become—

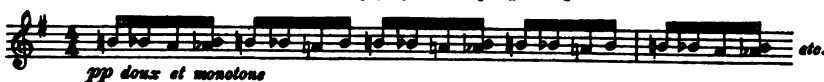
*Pour invogner Pan, dieu du vent d'été* (from “*Épigraphes antiques*,” arranged for 2 hands—measure 4-6)

Moderé



in order to write pages which still have a fleeting beauty; yet which savor of artifice, and are lacking in life and movement. Of what account is it that everything is in its place, and that the balance of the composition, as always, is marvellously observed. To-day we stand silent before these pictures: they no longer have anything to say to us. The cold admiration we may concede them wakes no echo in our hearts. And when, for all that it has been done with indisputable mastery, the composer struggles with the difficulty of lending accents as varied as possible to a fundamental elaboration throughout three entire pages on the whole-tone scale (II. *Pour un tombeau sans nom*), we are oppressed by all this effort which is deployed without any noteworthy result. And when he hunts for new onomatopoeia to depict the rain (VI. *Pour remercier la pluie au*

*Pour remercier la pluie au matin* (from “*Épigraphes antiques*,” arranged for 2 hands—measure 1)



*matin*), we think with longing and sorrow of the freshness and radiance of *Jardins sous la pluie*.

Passing over the *Berceuse héroïque*, an occasional number dedicated to the King of the Belgians in a moment of exaltation for that outraged land (far more truly felt is the *Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maison*, composed—words and music—on the eve of a painful operation); we will not dwell at length on the three larger compositions for two pianos which Debussy has named *En blanc et noir*, perhaps to indicate the *acqua fortis* character, the etched quality in its accentuated contrast with color. Although standing out among the composer's productions, by reason of their unusual dimensions, these pieces tell us nothing that we do not already know. The first movement is vivacious in spirit, and has great rhythmic fluidity; yet at bottom it is no more than an elegant *valse-caprice*, whose first chord-successions and whose tonality bring to mind the *Gradus ad Parnassum*. In the second Debussy gives us a war scene, in which he endeavors to present a great fresco, perhaps better adapted to symphonic than to pianistic expression. The various phases through which the composition moves, may be traced and described with ease, so well differentiated and characteristic are its various episodes. The piece begins with a signal alarm on a double pedal (F sharp and C), whose upper note is a far-away beat of the drum; after a few measures a folk-song, a *noël*, redolent of home-sickness, is heard, immediately succeeded by another song, liturgic in quality, as though a priest were celebrating funeral rites. Meanwhile, as the song rises once more in the distance, against a gloomy and symmetric harmonic background, the rallying beat of the insistent drum continues on the same menacing pedal-point which announces the imminent battle. Then we have Luther's solemn chorale, to which is alertly opposed a ringing French fanfare. These are, practically, the various moments as they succeed each other, and the alarm signal completes the military picture. We have not overmuch sympathy for this species of invocation, in whose episodes we find a logic more rational than artistic, and which, musically, give evidence of no more than a far-off affinity among themselves. In the third movement we have, in a fashion, the effect of being transported into the intimacy of a room, while without the wind is whistling (see, for a movement similar to this one, *Le vent dans la plaine*), bringing with it wails of lamentation. The rain beats against the window-panes and the old castellan relates a terrifying legend (narrative rhythm in the seventh measure, later renewed with chords of the ninth, and with major thirds in chromatic progression). The whirlwind passes and dies in the distance; the sky regains its serenity, and the moon

illuminates a white and silent landscape. Although as regards this last movement of the composition, we may repeat what has already been said regarding the second; it evinces, besides, a more annoying meed of disorganization, and shows in a more evident degree an extension beyond the potentialities of its generating material. How far superior are the *Études*, contemporary with them. The twelve Debussyan *Études*, albeit loyal to the exigencies of a mechanical formula chosen among the principal difficulties of pianoforte technic, are very far from conveying that impression of weariness and monotony which we experience when listening to other celebrated studies written merely to overcome mechanical difficulties, and to bring them to a head in concert virtuosity. Debussy, in his *Études* wrote imaginative compositions, in which is evident the predominance of his personality over their didactic end and aim. He wrote compositions which are named according to the mechanical formulas predominating in each; yet which may be provided with titles in accordance with individual taste. As a result, it would be absurd and puerile to think of these *Études*, these studies, as *means* for proportioning vigor to the hand and freedom of movement to the fingers; rather is it opportune to regard these pages as an ultimate of perfection, as an end of conquest, in which the composer's imaginative intelligence, and his virtuosity, in turn complete each other, without interference.

As is natural, among the many artifices of piano technic Debussy chooses those in particular which are peculiar to his own manner of musical expression; and in so doing he reveals himself most completely, with the greatest freedom from constraint in his method of procedure, and spontaneity in accomplishment. This, for example, in the studies for *fourths* and for *sixths*—intervals dear to this French composer—and those for *contrasting sonority*, for *composite arpeggios*, and for *chords*. In these, whoever is familiar with Debussy's works and loves them, will find reborn, across the web of his harmonic delicacies, the most felicitous moments of the past, retold with discretion, and what is more, with all the composer's marvellous science, which he shows in the broadest sense of the word. In such wise that these *Études*, though difficult beyond the ordinary, should not intimidate the player who attempts them, after he has truly felt and comprehended the spirit of Debussy's art. When the pianist endowed with a good technic will have dissected their organic structure, and their musical conception, they will all prove to be manageable to the fingers, owing to the pianistic manner, akin to the nature of the keyboard itself, in which they have been written. And it will be as easy for him to give a title, in his own

mind, to each one of these compositions, as it is for one who has long lived in communion with the human soul to divine a word or a name from a gesture. As regards the first of the *Études*, for example: the one "for the five fingers," after *Monsieur Czerny*, we may repeat what has already been said anent the first movement of the *Suite pour piano*. In it two adversaries, equally well munitioned, confront each other, Debussy and Czerny. At first Mr. Czerny has the word, and tranquilly begins with the most pedantic of diatonic exercises on five notes; but along comes Debussy to annoy him with notes which do not belong to the key, and with a jig rhythm. His impertinence is without any limit, and a battle rages all along the line of the five white and the five black keys. Then Mr. Czerny begins to lose his calmness and—his memory of the key in which he was playing!—and with impetuous fury attacks a long scale in D flat major, in order to take refuge from the mockery of his obstinate rival, or to shout out in desperation his excellent professorial arguments. Debussy, joining him in the bass, makes fun of him with his most terrible scherzo: with one turn of the hand he forces him back within the confines of law and tonality, and leaves poor Mr. Czerny with a finger to his nose. This magnificent study might well be named: "A personal affair between Messrs. Czerny, teacher by profession, and Debussy, without fixed profession."

Perhaps the suggestion of what it expresses might evoke a melancholy and arid landscape in the case of the second study, *Pour les tierces*, which, nevertheless, is not composed of thirds only, but in which these are in most cases preceded by sixths and fourths, with frequent hints of *Les tierces alternées*. The following one, *Pour les quarts*, is more a prelude from the second book of the *Préludes* than a true study. In the fourth *étude* we find a few fugitive echoes of Chopin in the middle part; while in the fifth study a graceful bell design, which recalls Balikirew and other Russians, is developed in the movement of a waltz caprice. In the study for *Pour les huit doigts*, the composer's suggestion excludes the thumb in the four-note groups confided to each of the hands, and which make us think of the technic of Bach's day, employed in the preludes, the fantasias, and in the toccatas.

In the second book of the *Études*, the composer frees himself to a still greater extent from the bonds of form, abandoning himself to that lyric fancy which has given us the *Préludes*. The study *Pour les sonorités opposées* presents, in alternatives of light and shade, the contrast between lofty irradiant peaks and deep, shadowed abysses, opposites of sonority heard in the most profound silence. And only the chime of a bell in the distance (see the first measures of *Les*

*Collines d'Anacapri*) brings an echo of human life into the solitary mountain regions.

In the eighth *étude*, nymphs and fauns are dancing; and in the one following, the eccentric figure of good *Général Lavine* reappears; while the chromatic design of the study devoted to precision in chromatic steps, makes one think of a sea-breeze. It is worthy of note that in these two compositions the composer succeeds in reconciling us to the use of certain stereotype designs, which no longer seemed capable of renewing themselves in his spirit: be it the design which records the numberless "spinners" and "at the fountains," or the one in repeated notes, dear to every composer of salon music during the past century. The final *étude* leads up to sonorous effects of a novel experience, and is given the characteristic gait of a barbarous dance.

We venture to hope that the hour may never strike in which such *Études* will be "adopted" (is that what they call it?) in the schools and conservatories; for that hour would mark the decline of their beauty. That day would see their entire sacrifice to the materialism of mechanism, and the victims to whom they were thus taught, would end by loathing this divine poet of sound, perhaps more than he himself loathed the "scholastic faculty" in general. This overdoing in the technical direction has been the fate of other composers of the past, not excluding Chopin, who have been in a fair way of becoming mere program numbers in examinations for a diploma. Students devoid of more than normal talent, have ended by placing in the same category the studies of Liszt and those of Czerny, those of Brahms and of Moscheles, of Schumann and of Henselt, of Chopin and of Rubinstein; as they may end, to-morrow, by bracketing Debussy and—for all I know—Schulhoff! It is thus, with a tribute of devotion to the great Pole—to whom the *Études* are dedicated—that Debussy's works for the pianoforte end.

The entirety of his output for piano discloses itself—we repeat—as particularly significant of the personality of the French composer. Debussy's production as a whole embraces—it is true—many other *genres* and turns to other instruments: to the voice in his chamber lyrics; to the orchestra; to the harp; to the clarinet; and, toward the end, to the flute, and to the viola, the violin and the 'cello as solo instruments (in the last three *Sonatas*). But the piano remains his preferred instrument, since it is at the same time the most intimate and most capable of variety; its sonal resources are those which seem to express most completely, and in its most subtle *nuances* the atmosphere in which Debussy's art floats. Debussy achieves a union of the greatest loftiness with the drama and the



symphonic poem; yet the impression he makes on us is that he has not revealed himself to the full in them as in his piano pages. The effect conveyed is that one portion of the sensitive soul of this shy and timid artist—who hated, as strongly as it is possible to hate, grandiloquent gestures, resounding cries, mastodonian compositions and multiple orchestral phalanxes—must always have remained in hiding when he came to express himself symphonically. And although, at bottom, just as many pianoforte compositions by the nineteenth century romanticists smack of the orchestra, in quite a few of Debussy's symphonic scores, perhaps, we *feel* the piano. This is because he has made such extensive use of those subtle sonorities, sonorities delicately high, or as though drawn in stump-tracery (it is hard to find words which really express artistic sensations so exquisitely French, perhaps!), which are the property of the piano, even more so of the clavicembalo or of the pianoforte of fifty years ago: in a word of an instrument of percussion, or one plucked. We need only recall for a moment, in the composition of the Debussyan orchestra, the major importance of the "battery" of percussives, the xilophone, celesta, carillon, etc., as well as of the harp and the company of the wood-winds, as contrasted with the string quartet and the brasses. With all this we do not wish to belittle the perspicacity of expression of the Debussyan orchestra: Whosoever would deny it, would he not be questioning the perfect fit of the instrumental garb to the thought of *Iberia* or *La Mer*? We merely desired to emphasize the importance of his pianistic production, as a medium which reveals in the most exquisite manner Debussy's sensitiveness and esthetic personality.

This piano music is little played, and that but poorly. The pianists have begun to introduce a few of the *Préludes* in their programs, yet usually attribute to them only a color value: it is as though a pinch of salt were put in a cauldron of water. True pianistic importance—beyond its musical value—as a rule, is not conceded the music written by Claude Debussy for the instrument. Very few appreciate the importance which such an output occupies in the history of the pianoforte literature. A more reflective study of this music would open up to the pianist a vast, new horizon, and would place the public in more frequent contact with this musical idiom, so pure and so characteristic in quality.

We have already emphasized the difficulty inherent in this music, a difficulty more of an intimate order, interpretative rather than mechanical. Because of this, many who cannot succeed in liberating their sense of hearing from the four-squareness and symmetry of classical pieces, call Debussy *difficult*: and difficult the

music of Debussy will always remain for those who can see in it nothing but dissonances, and are desperately seeking *their* melody. There is no need of searching in Debussy's compositions for something which is not there; it is enough to understand fully that which they do contain: in particular as regards their poesy. Then we will already be well advanced toward becoming its qualified interpreters. But in order to attain this end, it is necessary, before all, to lay aside the idea of drawing out "effects," because frequently such *effects* were not in the composer's mind, and only the pianist is apt to aim at such. "That quality of execution which is of major importance is tonal unity," is Laloy's precious *dictum*, and he may be considered the most faithful interpreter of the master's idea. "All that disturbs this unity, vocal *portamenti*, suspensions in rhythm, arbitrary *rallentandi* or *accelerandi*, is not only useless but fatal. It would be better, perhaps, to deceive one's self completely with regard to the character of a composition and, for instance, play the *Pagodes* rapidly, or the *Soirée dans Grenade* after the manner of a toreador on guard, than to brusquely shatter the *charm* of the music by a blow of the fist, or a grimace. . . . The pianists should, in addition, give up their pretensions to *emphasizing the melody*; whatever slight relief of this kind may be necessary will come of itself and to insist would be to drop into romantic affectation. On the other hand, pianists should not draw undue attention to the rapid figurations whose business it is to envelope the principal song theme, to signalize it with a linear harmony, conforming to the individual character of the piano itself, and to give life to the background. It is better to confound, to mix these designs, even to drop occasional false notes, than to conquer their difficulties in order to celebrate a triumph, and bid for applause with a gymnast's grace. . . ." As regards those notes marked with a little line, some are played *staccato*, others are *emphasized*. What should determine the manner of rendition, "is, instead, a transparent sonority, which may be secured by a frank attack for a tone without hardness, which the pedal will prolong, the finger suddenly releasing the key. . . ."

To these counsels of a more special order, may be added a final word of advice which covers the execution of all that Debussy has written for the piano, and which may be defined as a consequence deducted from the very essence of Debussy's works themselves. Debussy's piano music *does not develop*: a measure depends neither on its successor nor on its predecessor for its own reason for being: the measures are not subordinate parts, one of the other; but all have their own essential value. The measures suggest themselves, one

after another, but in each one of them the music is complete, as though all elaboration had been condensed, and the component elements had come to place themselves one beside the other. The executant, therefore, must pay heed, almost to the point of inverisimilitude, to the expressiveness of each melodic fragment, of each chord. In the interpretation of each page he must follow an analytical criterion, far removed from that which he would adopt in interpreting the pages of other composers who have preceded Debussy. The results which he will obtain will be such as will compensate him largely for his patient toil and the violence done his usual habit.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Claude-Achille Debussy, b. at Saint-Germain-on-Laye, August 22, 1862; d. in Paris, March 26, 1918.

The following is a complete list of all the compositions Debussy has written for the piano, and which have been published to date. (The date of composition precedes each work; the date of publication follows it. The data has been drawn from well-authenticated sources, such as Laloy and Jean-Aubry.)

1888. *Deux Arabesques*. pub. Durand (1904).

1888. *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra,<sup>1</sup> pub. Fromont (1911).

1890. *Ballade*. pub. Fromont (1890).

*Danse*. id.

*Mazurka*. id.

*Réverie*. id.

*Valse romantique*. id.

*Nocturne*. pub. *Société d'Éditions Musicales* (previously, Figaro Musical) (1890).

<sup>1</sup>This *Fantaisie* was played for the first time in public on December 7, 1919, at the *Concerts Lamoureux*, and has a little history that is worth while relating. Debussy wrote it at the Villa Medici, and it was a "Mas. sent from Rome." It greatly shocked the academical and, like the *Demoiselle bleue*, was refused the honor of a performance on their part. It was then engraved by a Paris publisher (Fromont?); but when the composer received proofs, he was seized with scruples, and wanted to make some modifications. The publisher objected, undoubtedly for reasons of economy, and in view of the legitimate obstinacy of the composer, actual publication of the work was suspended . . . until after Debussy's death!

We have not been able to examine this youthful work by the composer. Florent Schmitt tells us that it "surpasses the *Demoiselle* in interest, and strangely anticipates some very much later preludes, so far as their melodic and harmonic construction are concerned. This work ushers in, if one may say so, the mature and definite Debussy of *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, of the *Fêtes* and the *Jeux de vagues*. . . . As far as the piano part is concerned, it is handled in sufficiently characteristic fashion, forming an integral part of the orchestra, in the manner of anticipating the procession in *Pétrouschka*, without having anything in common with the aggressive virtuosity of the solo *concerto*."

- Suite bergamasque*; pub. Fromont (1905).  
1. *Prélude*.  
2. *Menuet*.  
3. *Clair de lune*.  
4. *Passepied*.
1891. *Marche écossaise (Marche des Comtes de Ross)* on a folk-theme—orchestrated in 1908—pub. Fromont.  
*Pour le piano*; pub. Fromont (1901).  
1. *Prélude*.  
2. *Sarabande*.  
3. *Toccata*.
1903. *D'un cahier d'esquisses*; pub. Schott, Bruxelles (1904).  
*Estantes*; pub. Durand (1903).  
1. *Pagodes*.  
2. *La Soirée dans Grenade*.  
3. *Jardins sous la pluie*.
1904. *Masques*; pub. Durand (1904).  
*L'Isle joyeuse*, id.
1905. *Images*. First Series; pub. Durand (1905).  
1. *Reflets dans l'eau*.  
2. *Hommage à Rameau*.  
3. *Mouvement*.
1907. *Images*. Second Series; pub. Durand (1908).  
1. *Cloches à travers les feuilles*.  
2. *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*.  
3. *Poissons d'or*.
1908. *Children's Corner (Coin des enfants)*. Little Suite; pub. Durand (1908).  
1. *Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum*.  
2. *Jimbo's Lullaby (Berceuse des éléphants)*.  
3. *Serenade for the doll (Sérénade à la poupée)*.  
4. *The snow is dancing (La neige danse)*.  
5. *The little Shepherd (Le petit berger)*.  
6. *Golliwogg's cake-walk*.
1909. *Hommage à Haydn*; pub. Durand (1909); but previously in the S. I. M.
1910. *La plus que lente*. Waltz; pub. Durand (1910).  
*Préludes*. First Book; pub. Durand (1910).  
1. *Danseuses de Delphes*.  
2. *Voiles*.  
3. *Le vent dans la plaine*.  
4. *"Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir"* (Baudelaire).  
5. *Les collines d'Anacapri*.  
6. *Des pas sur la neige*.  
7. *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest*.  
8. *La fille aux cheveux de lin*.  
9. *La sérénade interrompue*

10. *La cathédrale engloutie.*
  11. *La danse de Puck*
  12. *Minstrels.*
- 1910-1912. *Préludes.* Second Book; pub. Durand (1913).
1. *Brouillards.*
  2. *Feuilles mortes.*
  3. *La Puerta del vino.*
  4. "*Les Fées sont d'exquises danseuses.*"
  5. *Bruyères.*
  6. *General Lavine "eccentric."*
  7. *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune.*
  8. *Ondine.*
  9. *Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq. P. P. M. P. C.*
  10. *Canopé.*
  11. *Les tièrces alternées.*
  12. *Feux d'artifice.*
1913. *La boîte à joujoux* (The Box of Toys). Children's Ballet by André Hellé; pub. Durand (1914).
1914. (December). *Berceuse héroïque*, in honor to H. M. King Albert I, of Belgium, and his soldiers; pub. Durand (1915).
- 1915-1916. *Douze Études.* Two Books; pub. Durand (1916).
1. *Pour les "cinq doigts"* (After Mr. Czerny).
  2. *Pour les Tièrces.*
  3. *Pour les Quartes.*
  4. *Pour les Sixtes.*
  5. *Pour les Octaves.*
  6. *Pour les huit doigts.*
  7. *Pour les Degrès chromatiques.*
  8. *Pour les Agréments.*
  9. *Pour les Notes répétées.*
  10. *Pour les Sonorités opposées.*
  11. *Pour les Arpèges composées.*
  12. *Pour les Accords.*
1915. *Six épigraphes antiques.* For four hands; pub. Durand (1915).
1. *Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été.*
  2. *Pour un tombeau sans nom.*
  3. *Pour que la nuit soit propice.*
  4. *Pour la danseuse aux crotales.*
  5. *Pour l'Égyptienne.*
  6. *Pour remercier la pluie au matin.*
- En blanc et noir.* For two pianos, four hands; pub. Durand (1915).
- I. *Qui reste à sa place  
et ne dance pas,  
de quelque disgrâce  
fait l'aveu tout bas.*  
("Who stays in his place  
Nor dances for choice;  
The while some disgrace  
He admits in low voice.")  
(J. Barbier et M. Carré—*Romeo et Juliette.*)

- II. *Prince, porté soit des serfs Eolus  
en la forest où domine Glaucus.  
Ou privé soit de paix et d'espérance  
car digne n'est de posséder vertus  
qui mal voudroit au royaume de France.*  
("Prince, or carried by Eolus's serfs  
In woods where Glaucus reigns supreme,  
Or robbed of peace and hope's fair choice,  
Worth having virtues none I deem  
Who wish ill to the realm of France.")  
(F. Villon.)
- III. *Yver, vous n'este qu'un vilain. . . .*  
(Ch. d'Orléans.)  
("Yver, you are but low-born. . . .")

Much has been written concerning Debussy, particularly in France: in Italy his works have not as yet been made the object of an exhaustive study, at least, unless we wish to regard as such the inconclusive pamphlet *Debussy e un innovatore?* (Is Debussy an innovator?) published in Rome, in 1910, and which demonstrates its author's mediocre equipment for a critical comprehension of modern art, and that of Debussy in particular. Rather there may be read with interest Tommasini's essay (*Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. XIV, p. 157); that of Ildebrando Pizetti (which refers especially to *Pelléas*) published in the same magazine (XV, 350), and in the volume *Musicisti Contemporanei* (Treves, 1914) and that of Adriano Lualdi, mainly devoted to an examination of the *Martyre de St.-Sébastien* (*Rivista Musicale Italiana*, XXV, 271). We know of no critical essays dealing specifically with the piano compositions, with the exception of the insignificant one by Burlingame Hill in the *Mercure Musical* (Oct. 15, 1906). As regards Debussy's art in general there is nothing more worth while calling attention to than Louis Laloy's *Debussy* (Dorbon, 1909, but now out of print), which is the keenest and most comprehensive work among those which this poet and prophet of Debussyism has written, and among those which have been written by others on the same subject. Notwithstanding, among these writings may be mentioned the valuable pages which G. Jean-Aubry dedicated to the author of *Pelléas* in *La musique française d'aujourd'hui* (Perrin, 1916), those of Romain Rolland in *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui* (Hachette, 1908), Daniel Chennevière's monograph (Durand), and one, in English, by F. Liebich (John Lane). Among articles appearing in foreign reviews the following might be instanced as being of the greatest interest: M. D. Calvo-coressi, "Claude Debussy" (*The Musical Times*, Feb., 1908); Lawrence Gilman, "Wagner and Debussy" (*Musical Standard*,

Nov. 28, 1908); L. Laloy, *Claude Debussy et la simplicité dans la musique* (*Revue Musicale*, Feb. 15, 1904); L. Laloy, *Debussy et le Debussysmo* (*S. I. M.*, Aug., 1910); J. Marnold, *Debussy* (*Mercure de France*, April 16, 1908); Ernest Newman, "The Development of Claude Debussy" (*The Musical Times*, May-June, 1918); and the November issue of the *Echo Musical*, entirely devoted to Debussy, with articles by Schmitt, Chantavoine, Roussel, Samazeuilh and others.<sup>1</sup>

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens)

<sup>1</sup>Any bibliography of Debussyan literature should include the articles published in "The Musical Quarterly" of October, 1918: "Claude Debussy," by J. Jean-Aubry; and J. G. Prodhomme's "Claude Achille Debussy." Nor should, in Lawrence Gilman's "Nature in Music" (John Lane), be overlooked the pertinent reflections on Debussy's works embodied in "Tonal Landscapes" (p. 11) and "Music and the Sea" (p. 73) nor his little book on "Pelléas et Mélisande" (Schirmer). The second number of *La Revue Musicale* (Paris, Dec. 1, 1920) is entirely devoted to Debussy, and aside from the "Tombeau de Claude Debussy" (ten memorial compositions by Dukas, Roussel, Malipiero, Goossens, Béla Bartók, Schmitt, Stravinsky, Ravel, de Falla and Satie, dedicated to the composer's manes) contains articles by a number of leading French critics on various phases of Debussy's art.

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**Address editorial communications to the editor,  
MR. O. G. SONNECK,  
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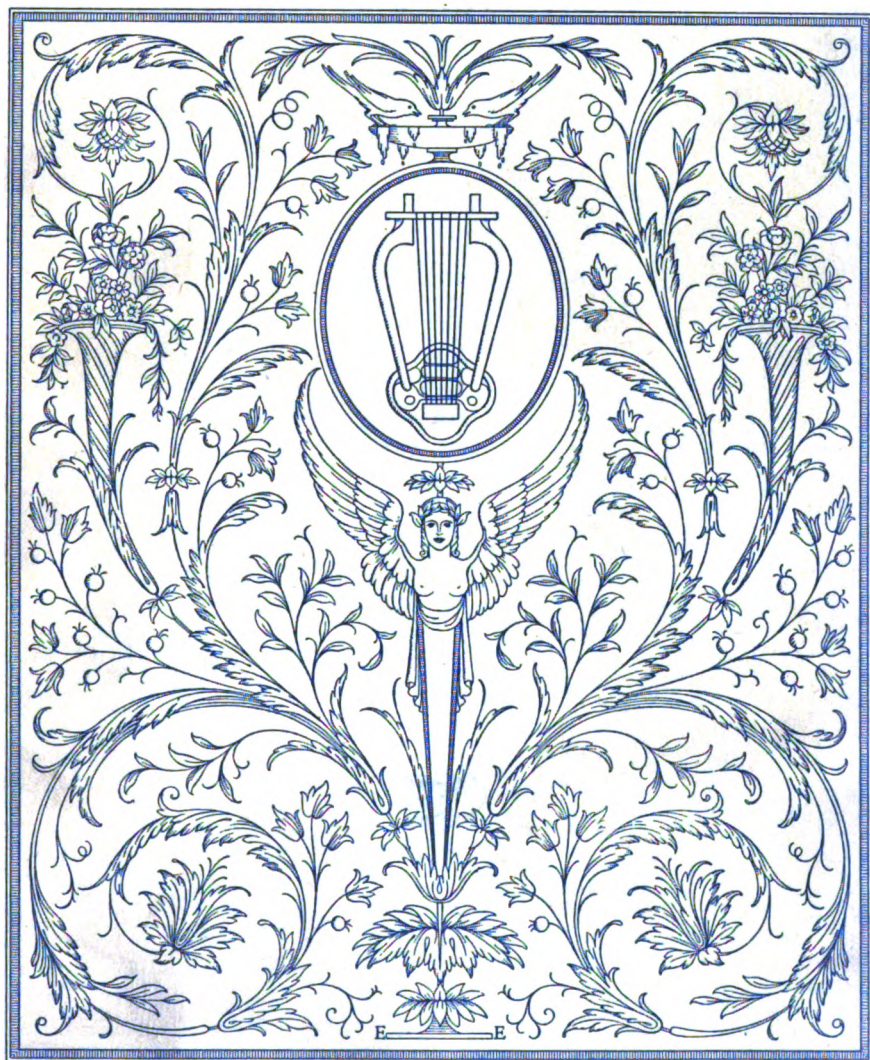


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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY



G. SCHIRMER, Inc. NEW YORK







# **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY**





# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. 7, No. 4

O. G. SONNECK, *Editor*

OCTOBER, 1921

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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. VII

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## MUSIC, MELODIOUS AND ODIIOUS

By CARL ENGEL

I would rather be a man of disinterested taste and liberal feeling, to see and acknowledge truth and beauty wherever I found it, than a man of greater and more original genius, to hate, envy and deny all excellence but my own—but that poor scanty pittance of it (compared with the whole) which I had myself produced!

HAZLITT—"On Criticism."

**I**N some deep furrow of my brain—where unavowed suspicions slumber open-eyed, until the ripening rays of disillusionment awake them into blind convictions—I harbor the belief that to a multitude of people music has always meant, and will continually mean, but one thing out of two: something melodious or odious. Here is the tonic of your critical scale, and here its higher octave. That listless ears must ever be confounding them, is but the natural result of similarity. Nor am I thinking only of her who defined music as "the breath of God made audible," or of him who pronounced it "the costliest of rackets." As a matter of fact, it would require little dialectic to prove that the most odious and the most melodious music are the same. This much admitted, we might as well confess ourselves deaf, and remain dumb to boot. But that would be cowardice, or a temper so closely resembling it as to rob discretion of its share in valor. It would stunt the noble courage which makes us enter the tilt-yard of criticism, where we face, not possible defeat in even combat, but the inevitable discomfiture of becoming offensive to our acquaintances and absurd to posterity. We are ever assaulting impregnable windmills, or fighting invulnerable phantoms, for the simple reason that the pedal point in all critical debate on music is that droning diapason, melodious—odious; and never can a reasonable majority of ears be expected to agree: which is the higher, which the lower sound?

Of course, we know this octave spans an infinitude of other ratios; at least, the assumption that it does is the cherished plumb and compass for all intrepid mariners who venture upon the laneless waters of musical arbitrament. But it is nothing unusual to see the sun rising where we expected it to set, because the two polar points of our musical axis, those of melodiousness and odiousness, are so very nearly undistinguishable that each individual sails by a private azimuth of taste. Hence the occasional collisions between opinionated pilots and the general failure to get anywhere. The musical landlubber, being equally "at sea," is by his very uncertainty made all the more determined to proclaim his stand on *terra firma*, while he is merely crowing lustily into the world his elevation on a slippery and unfirm mixen. The net result of this condition is the variously edifying legacy of musical dicta to which each successive generation falls heir and adds its portion for the enlightenment and the amusement of all the following.

Would it were always as enlightening as it is amusing. Unfortunately, contemporaneous musical criticism is not kept or read long enough after it was written to prove as instructive as it might be. Only the salient blunders are preserved by tradition for the titter of those who are just as prone to guess the wrong way as were their ancestors. One of the distressing effects directly attributable to this calamity, is the fact that so many wary critics, preferring to play safe, stoop to be downright "funny." They hope thus to evade the squibs by quipping. And that is greatly to be regretted. For not the most entertaining article, the cleverest reviling, or the most brilliant persiflage, will be as illuminative as is the honest mind of the contemporary reviewer who detected in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony "the obstreperous roarings of modern frenzy," and who suspected the composer of writing "to suit the present (1824) mania!" At a time when Weber's was still "wild and visionary music" and it could be said that "all the songs in 'Der Freischütz,' with the exception of three, are *unvocal*," poor Marschner was accused of yielding "to the prevailing passion of the day—noise!" By people of acumen the melodic invention of "that merry manufacturer," Rossini, was called extremely limited; only a few phrases were granted him to be his own, and those he was "repeating on all occasions, whether they relate to the low intrigues of a barber in Spain or to the mighty acts of a prophet in Egypt." Along came Paolo Scudo, who predicted the early and certain fall of "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser" because of Liszt's enthusiasm for this music—"ce qui est de très mauvais augure pour l'avenir

de M. Wagner"—and proclaimed Rossini's "*Mofse*" a work of true genius, asserting that neither Mozart, Gluck nor Weber "*n'égale la fécondité et la variété d'accents qui distinguent le compositeur italien!*" Who shall blame a music critic after that—and the sampling might be indefinitely prolonged—if he choose to be designedly humorous rather than involuntarily so?

Now, the whole trouble lies in the fact that between melodious and odious there seems to be no secure foot-hold. The truth and the paradox of music is that both extremes constantly meet, that they are ever undergoing an imperceptible fusion and transformation. The two terms do not express a difference in kind, but in degree; and the degree depends on the listener, not on the music. Keener than the joy of hearing music is that of remembering it. Man dearly loves a tune that he can whistle. But let him go on whistling the finest tune for any length of time and he will drop it like hot coal. The ear must become accustomed to, and conscious of, a sound before it can derive from it full æsthetic pleasure; and with the moment that a sound, or succession of sounds, has been established and accepted, the ear, grown used and overconscious, immediately begins to tire of it.

Jules Combarieu has defined music as "the art of thinking in tones." He must have been not a little impressed with his own definition, since he placed it as a motto at the head of his book on the laws and evolution of music. While it does not embrace all the elements, all the aspects of music any more than do other attempts at concentrating the essence of so volatile a substance, it may serve, if we take into account not only that thought can traverse the whole long range from baseness, through commonplaceness, to sublimity, but also realize that not all of our thoughts must necessarily rise to the surface of consciousness. Our subconscious mind has had to take the blame for a lot of things that we are either too ignorant to comprehend or too ashamed to acknowledge. The pleasure of listening to music is largely a matter of subconscious spheres, in thought or in emotion. Only when the reasons for this pleasure are wholly understood, when music becomes sufficiently articulate to penetrate our consciousness, does the thought "register," as it were, and we have the proud gratification of "following the composer." To lag behind is no worse than to be ahead of him, which is a not infrequent sensation derived from hearing the work of certain men. For if all the arts in common aspire towards the principle of music, all music aspires towards the state of obviousness. We may as well go farther and say that music

which does not at some time or other reach this state, has not been begot a natural expression of a clear and consequential thought. But what is obvious "before the time" has no claim at all to answer our desire for the mystifying, the exalting tendencies of art, which quench a finer thirst, which fill a higher want, and make of art the noblest form of human satisfaction. Only what has been so conceived that, once become obvious, it resolve greater mystery and unveil deeper truth, may hope to live and to avoid the danger incurred by all things that are too obvious, namely of growing odious. The finest music is perhaps that which persistently evades all efforts of the patient investigator to pluck the petals and pistils apart *in majorem Dei gloriam*, and yet is manifestly a symbol of cosmic serenity and human perturbation. Take the ludicrous attempt to explain Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 4, as portraying the altercation between a Jewish innkeeper and a drunken peasant, earning for it "in Poland"—so 'tis writ—the name of "*Zydki*," little Jew! Imagine, a silly pothouse brawl, that vaguest and most concrete bit of Chopin, containing in a few measures the nostalgia of a whole civilization, the subtlest glimpse of personal revelation, exhaling the sweetness of cancer, smilingly kissing the hand of Death, frightful and beautiful like all things tragic and compassioning! God gave the flower perfume, man gave it a Latin name. No, when music is pressed between the leaves of an herbarium, it becomes more ghastly than when organs grind it out in the street, when fiddles scrape it as a seasoning into our food, or when trombone and rattle accompany with it the rites of modern orgiasts.

The most forward, because the most obvious, thing in music is a melodic phrase. Hence it is constantly on the point of becoming odious to someone for whom it has nothing more to resolve, nothing new to unveil. And thus a piece of music will make the wider, the more instant appeal the more obvious it is; and for the same reason it will fall sooner into dislike and oblivion. The so-called "popular" music abounds in pertinent examples. Where are the shows of yesteryear? Greater the pity that such gemlike bibelot as the "Japanese Sandman" must meet the abrupt doom of hackneyed clinquant. But all music, in general, obeys this law. All music that lingers without the threshold, all that has too far overstepped the line of consciousness, is apt to be equally odious to different individuals.

At all times a musical idiom is forming in which some of us read a new melodic message, while to the rest, it remains unintelligible; on the other hand, we are inclined to reject as stale

an increasingly large number of tunes which by many are still held, or just perceived, to contain the magic of melody. "Both are right in what they admire, both are wrong in condemning the others for what they admire." We might announce the perplexing axiom that melody, "the life of music," is its death-germ. Undoubtedly it is the "melodious" type of music which becomes soonest odious, especially if it tries to be too much of a good thing. Which means that melodies should be picked before they are ripe. The Paris version of the "Bacchanale" still throbs with the communicative pulse of passion and flames with scintillating colors, while the "Evening Star" has paled before the splendor of a richer night and the promise of a fiercer dawn. The sands of time are running nowhere faster than in the realm of tone. Some of the best music is apt to "wear out," and, in the act of wearing, it does not gain enhanced attraction as does an old, familiar suit of clothes. What saves and preserves a great many compositions, is the fact that we hear them so seldom.

For my part, I do not require the emboldening authority of Arthur Schopenhauer to own my unswerving attachment to a good tune. But when Mr. Rachmaninoff presents it to the readers of "The Etude" as his opinion that the efforts of the poor, benighted Futurists must fail because of "their hatred for anything faintly resembling melody," I instantly climb upon my little dunghill and crow out, with all the vigor and lung power I command, that a few of Mr. Rachmaninoff's prettiest melodies have to my mind already passed into the stage of odiousness, while a good deal of music that is alleged to be tuneless holds me with potent charms. When all is said and done, the essential thing in criticism is the particular perch from which we view art and from which we do our critical crowing. Let the view be a fairly open one, and let our cock-a-doodle-do be possessed of an ingratiating ring, what more can you demand? We shall not quarrel as to what is melodious and what odious, so long as we realize that both terms may be, and are being, applied to the identical music, and that all we require of the critic is to make it attractive and profitable for us to mount with him his beacon, to listen for a "key" note in his call. He must be "the critic as artist." In that capacity, we may well believe that he is a necessity to art, that he is more creative than the artist himself, because "there is no fine art without selfconsciousness, and selfconsciousness and the critical spirit are one." It matters little, therefore, whether we range ourselves on the side of a waning or on that of a crescent phase of art. There are, indeed, different standards of de-



light, but there is only one pure, strong fire burning with which to search the whole reach of our ken; and we must give a true account of what we see. For, after all, the highest criticism, really, "is the record of one's own soul."

Fate has been often kind to me; its hardest blows have nurtured humbleness and Christian love within my breast. In all concerns with fellow men (and women) I try to be a stoic. Towards music I hold incorrigibly skeptic views. The composers for whose works I care, are comparatively few, but they give much to me. That does not mean that I am snobbishly impatient with the rest. My familiarity with the great mass as well as the great masters of music is far from thorough. Thus have I succeeded in remaining unperturbed by the former, and in retaining my respect for the latter. Never having learned to excel on any instrument, I still can go to a piano or violin recital and find the zest of novelty in pieces which other people, exasperated by over-application, look upon as bugbears. Nor is my enjoyment marred by constraining sympathy with struggles overcome. I flee academic fervor and anything soiled with the sweat of drilling. The best of Cicero and Molière is irretrievably lost to me by school associations.

Encyclopedic knowledge of opus numbers was never given me. My musical horizon is closely bounded. But in that narrow space there are no obstacles to keep me from the sparing stars above. Their light meets me undimmed and warms me with peculiar pleasures. The thing is, not to lose sight of stellar fixedness, while our neighbor sets off, with much ado, his Bengal fires, as short-lived as they are malodorous. Like the moving heavens above, these musical constellations have a very disconcerting way of change. They are subject to frequent shifting—around, perhaps, one or two suns of prime magnitude. New clusters, ever forming, are floating into the field of vision with startling suddenness, only to be eclipsed as suddenly by larger planets. There should be in music, as in astronomy, an open season for shooting stars. Some of them cannot be shot too soon to suit me.

I have not the slightest pretension to think that my case is unparalleled. My experience, surely, is shared by many people, unless they be hidebound: in pigskin, levant or crushed morocco. To all intents it is the same. For the assembling of impressions and beliefs in art, the card index and loose-leaf book are unsurpassed. An occasional rearrangement and weeding-out of cards and leaves is to be recommended. Hence such frank, if otherwise unimportant, avowals as mine have at least the effect

of a wholesome catharsis on the individual who makes them; sometimes they help others in doing a little house-cleaning among dusty notions of their own. And nothing gathers cobwebs more easily than the inherited ideas which, like the priceless and useless china of grandma, are reverentially placed so high on the shelves of our mental cupboard, that the daily feather-duster of doubting does not reach them. Descartes should have been canonized patron saint of critics. Instead of dissipating doubt, most critics cast lavishly of it before the public. Only the very old and very young enjoy the privilege of being recklessly positive or obstinately negative. For that reason their criticisms are the best reading.

There is nothing more boresome, aside from being well-nigh inconceivable, than an unprejudiced art-critic. Take away from any form of expression the personal note, and you have but an empty blast. What is intolerable is the uninformed critic and the dull. There can hardly be any question that we have too much of the wrong kind of criticism, too little of the right. Here is a pertinent remark penned not in 1921 but in 1789:

With respect to all the feuds and contentions lately occasioned by Music in France, they seem to have annihilated the former disposition of the inhabitants to receive delight from such Music as their country afforded. There are at present certainly too many critics, and too few candid hearers in France as well as elsewhere. I have seen French and German *soi-disant connoisseurs* listen to the most exquisite musical performance with the same *sans-froid* (sic!) as an anatomist attends a dissection. It is all analysis, calculation, and parallel; they are to be wise, not pleased.

And the special bone of contention to which these able surgeons apply their saws, is that ossified dilemma: melodious—odious.

The critic as performer of autopsies does not exactly measure up to Wilde's demands. And yet he should use probe and scalpel, but on himself. That is the "record of one's own soul." Is not in literature, in art the autobiographical the most arresting? And next to ourselves what is there to interest us more than our fellow sufferer? Rousseau's Confessions will outlive "Le Contrat Social" for reasons other than those that put the book on the Index. The pages of musical self-revelation in "Tristan" and "Die Meistersinger" have other qualities to boast of than the exhibitionist tendencies of a "Sinfonia domestica." Music is becoming less and less autobiographical, nor is it getting better for that reason. By the side of the great confessors in music, Bach and Beethoven, stand Franck with his fervent *de profundis* and the

maudlin *miserere* of Tchaikowsky. We have drifted into an era where music, braggartly self-accusing, more often shouts *peccavi*. But on the whole, ours is reflective music, casting reflections of moods and pictures on the mind. And in this often dazzling play of mirrors the radiation of music has been intensified, while its outline and substance have become diffused. Suggestion has taken the place of statement, and thereby music has learned to say a great many more things than it had ever said before. But again we hear cries of "odious" from those who will not recognize a spade unless you call it by its proper name. Meanwhile the diggers go on with their excavation which becomes the grave of the old and the foundation for the new. Perhaps we are writing music to-day that is too solidly reposing on dead matter. There is nothing deadlier in music than devices. Christopher Simpson, came he to earth again, might find that his opinion of 1667, "concerning our common scale of musick," needed revision. If ten parts in the ultra-modern Schoenberg's compositions are sheer, prophetic genius, forty are helplessness and fifty are *vieux jeu*, that is, obvious before the time!

And yet real art should never age. It links remote epochs of history into one Spring of high endeavor, and makes of alien races kindreds in the search for beauty. Let the artist cater to fashion, and his work will die with the birth of another whim. That is the fate of all things which are only timely, that they recede with time. To create is to build new tombs, to sing is to increase the sum of silence. But to create and sing is, nevertheless, the most precious business we can have here below. It is its own reward, and we must do it in the face of certainty that we can only dream those greater treasures, the intangible, elusive masterpieces of the soul: in painting, a shadowy and fragrant landscape, hushed in the strange light of an unfamiliar hour; in sculpture, a vibrantly respondent hand, held but in passing and forever felt; in literature, a page of opulent imagination, robed in the sober elegance of clean and clinging prose, describing nothing of importance save to the heart that languishes; in music, the echo of a cherished voice, the soft, contented laughter of a mistress known and lost in days when sin was too much innocence. Here is true art; more, here is lasting art. For through it all there moves a thread—all art, all life, aspiring towards the principles of music—a thread of living and expressive melody that will not soon grow obvious or odious.

The skeptic turned sentimentalist—fie! What unseemly attitude to strike, what challenge to the giggling crowd!

# ARCHITECTURAL ACOUSTICS

By ARTHUR ELSON

**T**HE velocity of sound in our atmosphere is about 1100 feet a second—more in warm weather, and less in cold. Sound travels via the "Air line;" that is, unless disturbed by reflectors or obstacles, it radiates outward from its source in straight lines, each particle of air being moved, and transmitting its motion to the next particle beyond it. Under these conditions the intensity of sound diminishes in proportion to the square of the distance it has travelled. In this respect it resembles light.

But while light is an imponderable vibration in the ether (if Einstein will let us keep the undulatory theory), sound waves are movements of actual matter. In this respect they have some analogy with ocean waves, and will follow curved surfaces in much the same way that the billows will wash up the slope of a shelving rock.

Sound has also the power of arousing sympathetic vibrations. The many resonators of Helmholtz, which he used to detect overtones, were antedated in principle by the hollow vessels placed here and there in the Greek or Roman theatres, to reinforce the speaker's voice.

All of these properties are employed in modern architecture, which is gradually mastering the rules of acoustics, and is becoming less of a hit-or-miss affair than it has been in previous centuries.

The chief obstacles to the best propagation of sound may be enumerated under five headings—natural diminution, absorption, obstruction, reverberation, and echo.

The first of these is the lessening of sound mentioned above, due to the increasing distance traveled. Thus at twice the distance from the speaker, the sound of his voice would seem only one-fourth as loud. This obstacle is encountered only in very large buildings, in which there is room for many devices that may aid the spread of sound and obviate this advantage.

Absorption takes place when there are large empty places above or behind the speaker. This is a negative rather than a positive action, and merely means that the building is not well

arranged to intensify the sound. A speaker in such a building is under much the same conditions as one who talks outdoors, in which case an ordinary voice is not clearly audible beyond sixty feet. For this reason the best concert-halls, and even churches, have performers' seats, or the pulpit, placed in a little recess, with a ceiling lower than that of the main building, and sloping upward as it extends forward. Theatres have somewhat the same structure, though there is no sloping ceiling over the stage.

A more real absorption of sound takes place when it encounters non-reflecting surfaces. Curtains, draperies, and even the clothing of the audience, are of this type. Every observant reader will know of cases in which the reverberation of a room or hall when empty would sound excessive, while the same structure when filled with furniture, or people, or both, would seem acoustically excellent. Usually there is an excess of such reverberation in public buildings, so that absorption becomes a benefit instead of a defect. For example, churches are very often improved by the use of matting or carpets on the floor. A similar treatment of floor and walls is often used to deaden sound in library reading-rooms. But in large halls, where power of tone is needed, the audience will produce all the necessary deadening, and perhaps too much.

Obstructions should be avoided as much as possible. Columns for the support of balconies are often necessary, but should be made as thin as is consistent with the necessary strength; and many halls dispense with them altogether. But in addition to having the hall consist of one large open space, it is advisable for the auditorium to be so arranged that each seat may command an unobstructed view of the speaker or performer. This is more important for speech than for music, as a sight of the orator's face is often a help to comprehension; but it is advisable for all buildings for public use. The curve thus formed by successive rows of seats is called the isacoustic curve. It is not always necessary to make this curve rise by rows, as it may rise by groups of rows. Thus in Jordan Hall, Boston, the slope is such that the front rows are on a gentle incline, while those at the back are steeper; and the effect is excellent. Many Scotch churches, and a number of concert-halls, make use of this curve, though it has not been generally adopted by theatres. It is shown in the Roman amphitheatre at Nîmes. Chladni states that a better effect is obtained by having the stage low and the curve steep than by reversing these conditions, as sound seems to be delivered

best on a level (at least by voices), and is then most effectively diverted upward by the curving tier of seats.

Obstruction to sound occurs when it suddenly enters a narrow space, such as that below balconies. The seats in such cases should be made steeper, so that the sound will be entering the open end of a wedge, instead of traversing a passage with parallel sides; but the overhang of the gallery often prevents this. In such cases the under side of the floor of the gallery should slope down toward the back if possible. Obstruction also occurs when sound leaves a very confined space. Thus a noise made in a tunnel, near its end, will produce an echo from that end, even though it is open to the outer air. This, however, need cause the architect no worry, since the boxed-in stage is never constricted enough to produce such an effect.

Reverberation is an excess of resonance, that prolongs a sound and gives it a confused effect without actually producing an echo. The cause of this defect is sometimes rather hard to locate. It may arise from the proportions of the building, or from the materials used in its construction, or from hollow places outside the walls, floor or ceiling. It may even be due to a partial echo at close range. It is an excess of resonance, which is a good quality when present in proper amount. The best buildings for hearing are those that have a large amount of resonance, without quite reaching the point where reverberation begins. Unduly high halls, with continuous walls, are apt to show excessive reverberation. Large open spaces in the ceiling, such as deep recesses or skylight openings, seem to cause the same defect, and should be cut off from below by some interruption, or should have their sides tapered whenever possible, to avoid rectangular recesses. Dampness of the walls seems to be another cause of reverberation, so that new buildings may seem poor at first, though improving greatly after a few months. This is usually true of plastered walls. It has been possible in certain cases to conceal the walls with drapery until they have become thoroughly dry. The cause of the trouble is not very clear; but since seasoned wood gives better resonance than green wood, it is probable that the wet walls merely cause an echo, while after drying they vibrate in sympathy with the sound that strikes them, causing resonance without echo. Yet excessive resonance, as well as short-range smothered echo, is held to be a cause of reverberation, which would seem to contradict the above suggestion. Reverberation is allowable in buildings of the stock-exchange type, where noise is permissible; but it should be obviated elsewhere. The most successful case

of remedying reverberation by a slight change was at Exeter Hall, England, where a plain ceiling was substituted for one which was coffered, or inlaid with rectangular recesses.

The formation of echos depends upon principles readily understood, and therefore easily avoidable. It is only in large buildings that there is a chance for sound to be reflected directly, and this is usually caused by the wall farthest from the stage or rostrum. In smaller rooms an echo follows too closely on the original sound to be heard separately. It is possible to have echos caused by a ceiling, as in the reading room of the British-Museum. In that place, when it is not well filled, a sound in the middle will produce an echo from the dome, though, of course, this is not a serious defect in a room devoted to silence. In halls for speaking or singing, the ceiling echo, if present, is usually heard by the auditors at the rear.

The lower the ceiling, the less chance there is of its producing an echo. In cases where this defect is caused by a high ceiling, something must be interposed to check the effect. Thus at Coblenz, when a large law court, 46 feet high, was found to show echo, a cloth stretched below the top remedied the defect at once, and proved that the ceiling was the cause. Such a cloth, or velarium, is in use at Albert Hall, London, where it serves not only to prevent echo, but to cut off a large empty space that would deaden the sound by absorption.

In many good halls, the rear wall is made semicircular, or given some other form that is not a plain surface. If the wall is plane, the tendency to echo may be obviated by the use of many openings in it, or draperies over it, or columns before it. In some cases the erection of a balcony at the rear has been sufficient to diminish or destroy an echo. Sometimes more complex echos exist, due to the diagonal reflection of sound around a rectangular hall. In such cases, entrance doors are sometimes put in the corners. Another remedy is to do away with the sharp angles by substituting curved surfaces where walls or ceiling meet. The walls are usually plane, but the ceiling itself may be made in two slopes, or a curve, as well as having rounded sides. Symphony Hall, in Boston, has its ceiling rounded off at the edges.

A noted example of echo was found in one of the Back Bay churches of Boston, when the congregation first tested it. Every word of the preacher was duly repeated, producing an effect not in the least devotional. The owners finally sold the structure at a loss. The new congregation succeeded in overcoming the defect only after many trials, their experiments including the

building of a gallery, with the raising of the floor, and the stringing of many wires. When the same architect afterwards built Trinity Church, he was greeted with the remark: "I hear you have built a church where they can hear the preacher." Yet the architect was a famous exponent of his art, which goes to show that acoustics at that time was even more a *terra incognita* than at present.

Among the famous echoes of nature, it is said that Lake Killarney possesses a harmonic echo, returning an overtone instead of giving the original sound. If true (and some writers mention other instances) this may become another defect to which buildings could be liable, though the present writer has not yet heard of an instance.

Bad proportions may make a hall an acoustic failure, in addition to the defects already mentioned. Usually, however, the defect of unfavorable dimensions is reverberation; but other troubles may be caused. Thus if the height is greater than the breadth, absorption may take place, the sound filling the upper volumes at the expense of the lower. Great height also makes ceiling echoes possible. Undue width with too low a ceiling might cause reverberation, and would be apt to produce certain spots among the audience where the hearing would be confused. The best effect is obtained with the width about one and one half times the height. The length must of course be the largest dimension. A good effect is always produced by having the three dimensions proportional multiples of some given number. This is especially true of the width and height. Thus in Free Trade Hall, at Manchester, England, the height is 52 feet, and the width 78 feet. The length, from the rear to the middle point of the recessed stage, is about 130 feet. This building is one of the best examples of good acoustics.

As an example of what to avoid in architectural acoustics, the Christian Science Temple, in Boston, may easily be awarded highest honors. The main part of its service-hall would be practically square by itself; but the height is too great in proportion, and the dome at the top causes a fairly noticeable echo. The side walls of this square, however, do not exist; for each side is rounded off in a large semicircle, topped by a half-dome. This makes the width much greater than the length. The back wall has a gallery, with supports that may divide the air into the vibrating spaces that produce reverberation; but the semicircular sides of the building cannot fail to cause this defect, since they carry a veritable network of arches and columns, rising in tiers, and extending all around the two curves. The reverberation of



these air spaces is so marked that the hearing is better and clearer a few feet outside of the doors than in the hall itself. The reader does the best that he can, by separating his syllables, and by giving them a long, sing-song effect, so that the reverberation and muffled echo from one syllable are not allowed to interfere much with the next; but the defects are still very noticeable.

Aids to good hearing in halls may be grouped under the two general heads of materials to obtain resonance, and reflectors of various sorts.

The use of sound-reflectors is widespread, and productive of excellent effects. This is necessarily true, since any reflector causing a bad effect is promptly and easily removed. A hard, polished surface is apt to produce a harsh effect, forming a too distinct echo that is not separate from the original sound, but produces an unpleasant effect. It is better to use resonant material rather than a reflecting surface, and slightly rough rather than smooth reflectors. The best material for this, as well as one of the cheapest, is wood.

Theoretically, a reflector shaped like a parabola seemed for many years the best form. The parabola is a curve so shaped that all lines reflected from a given point within it, called the focus, are parallel. Parabolic reflectors for light are used in automobile lamps and engine headlights. For reflecting sound, their most common use has been in churches, which always seem to present problems in architectural acoustics. A prominent example was a church at Attercliff, near Sheffield. When the preacher spoke first in the new building, there was a powerful resonance, but in spite of the resulting loudness, the words sounded unclear and confused. Changing the position of the pulpit proved unavailing, and nothing seemed to cause any improvement until the parabolic reflector was erected. This was hailed as a cure-all, and many other churches followed the example. But while this rendered the minister audible, the reflectors were soon found to have several defects. If the preacher moved about at all while talking, he would not always be in focus. But even in a fixed pulpit, trouble arose from the fact that the speaker could hear slight noises among the people, which were magnified by the reflector. He also heard a distinct and annoying echo of his own voice. Many of the reflectors, so popular at first, were afterwards torn down. At Attercliff, it was found that the original defects were less noticeable, probably because the plaster of the walls had had time to dry. Some churches had gone as

far as to build their walls in a parabolic shape; and they came to regret this procedure.

The parabolic reflector has been used to prevent sound. In the Berks County prison, in our own country, such reflectors have been introduced into the ventilating pipes, to prevent prisoners from communicating with one another. The sound is reflected back to its source in this case. Asbestos lining is often used to make walls sound-proof.

A plane reflector, inclined at an angle of from  $20^{\circ}$  to  $30^{\circ}$ , and sloping upward toward the audience, is now the most common form. Such a reflector cuts off some air space, and thus prevents absorption; it reflects sound directly toward the audience; and its material helps the tone by vibrating, as a sounding-board does in a piano.

The sympathetic vibration in any such material, whether in a sounding-board or in the wall, floor, or ceiling, adds to the resonance. This quality is sometimes obtained also by the intensifying power of the air itself. It may be helped by other devices; and where the ancients used resonating jars at various places in their public buildings, a modern authority has suggested the use of tubes of various sizes near the foot-lights of our theatres.

Almost all halls depend upon wooden linings for their resonance. The old ducal theatre at Parma, famous for its acoustics, was an early example. In this theatre a whisper from the stage could be heard anywhere in the auditorium. A more modern example is the hall of the Paris Conservatoire. The hall is stuffy and ill-ventilated, but the management is afraid to make any changes, lest the excellent acoustic qualities be destroyed.

The wooden linings for walls or ceiling, or the floor timbers, or the sounding-board, should all be thoroughly seasoned. The linings, and floor-boards, should be of uniform size, and as long as possible.

Empty spaces under the floor or above the ceiling have often proved excellent in increasing resonance. In European theatres and halls, especially in Italy, it has been customary to construct a hollow chamber below the stage. The value of this is shown by the case of the Teatro del Argentino, at Rome. When it became necessary to make the course of a canal run beneath the stage, the resulting air-space greatly improved the acoustics of the building.

That the ancient Romans were acquainted with the value of wooden construction is shown by a statement of Vitruvius. He advises the omission of the resonators used by the Greeks,

"since all public theatres built of wood have many floors, which are necessarily conductors of sound."

Wood is so cheap and so excellent a material that as yet no real substitutes for it are in use. For fireproof construction, however, thin metal plates have been suggested for use as room panels.

The excessive use of wooden linings may produce too much resonance, especially if the air-space of a hall is of such a form as to aid in the effect. But this is a fault that leans to virtue's side, for excessive resonance is very easily remedied. It must also be remembered that the presence of an audience helps to deaden the tone.

In dealing with air resonance, it might seem at first sight as if this would appear only on certain notes, in which cases the air would vibrate as a whole, or in fractional parts for overtones. That this is true to some extent is proved by the necessity for "voicing" such instruments as organs, or even pianos. The string, or pipe, that synchronizes with the vibration rate of the whole body of air will seem much louder than the others; and its power of tone must be lessened, to obviate this effect. But the example of the violin will show that it is possible for the semi-confined air, which must vibrate with the wood, to be set in motion at any vibration rate. In this way the air of certain buildings may help the speaker, no matter whether he pitches his voice high or low. But if he talks on the pitch of the entire air body, his voice, not "voiced" like the organ pipe mentioned above, will seem to gain greatly in power and resonance.

Good architects claim that the air resonates best when the dimensions of the building bear some simple relation to each other, as already illustrated by the figures given for Free Trade Hall. Under this condition the vibration rates for a certain overtone lengthwise will correspond with the rates of another overtone sidewise, and still another vertically. This reinforcement of overtones will add brilliancy to the speaker's voice, or the musical tone, and make it penetrate better.

Air currents are apt to interfere with the best transmission of sound. The slightest drift of air caused by an outside wind produces no important effect; but the currents due to heating have more influence. Some architects advise admitting the heat at the sides of the hall, and leaving openings between the balcony and the wall, through which the hot air may rise. It is also advisable to admit more than enough hot air from below, and at the same time allow the requisite amount of cold air to come in from above, through the roof.

Aerial resonance may sometimes be excessive; and this is probably the case in Canterbury Cathedral, where a note or chord is prolonged as if moving slowly around the walls of the edifice. While this effect may be beautiful in the slow passages of anthems, it interferes with the distinctness of the preacher's words, even if he talks slowly. For clearness in speaking, it is always advisable to diminish the air space as much as possible. Public halls may therefore be made low; while theatres should have area restricted, to make up for their great height. The extensive balconies are thus an aid to hearing, except to those auditors who are hidden below.

The avoidance of the chief and most noticeable defects that have been enumerated has been considered sufficient by the architects of the past. But the fullest attention to all details is most necessary; for the difference between tolerable halls and good halls is most marked. The good hall necessitates no severe effort on the part of the speaker; while a poor edifice, such as a badly built church, will tax the speaker greatly, so that a preacher's life may be actually shortened by the work forced upon him by bad acoustical conditions.

The phenomenon of whispering galleries is one that always attracts attention. They result from the fact that various sound waves from one point are made to converge to another. This may be caused by direct reflection; but sometimes, as in St. Paul's and in the Capitol at Washington, it is caused by the waves following the wall around, close to the floor, instead of being wholly a reflection from the dome.

The very strong tendency of sound waves to follow curved surfaces is made use of in the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City. This edifice is shaped exactly like half an egg, cut lengthwise; and as a result the speaker is clearly audible in every part of the huge structure, which is probably the most successful building in the world, acoustically speaking.

Before any further mention of modern successes is made, it will be decidedly in place to give due praise to the ancient Greek theatres. The stage was backed by a wall, which formed an excellent reflector. The semicircular tiers of seats, up which the sound waves could travel, just as ocean waves wash up a slope, were practically in an isacoustic curve. To the good effect of all this was added the resonance of the Echeia, or hollow vessels. Under such favorable circumstances, it is no wonder that the Greek drama flourished. Even when the theatres were built of stone or marble instead of wood, the loss

of resonance was hardly noticed, resonance being at a minimum in open air.

It is a far cry from these amphitheatres to the ducal Theatre at Parma, which flourished in the sixteenth century, and fell into disuse only when the court left the city. Its form was oblong, with the back corners of the walls rounded off. It was 130 feet from the stage front to the rear wall; and the width was 102 feet. Calling the distance to a point near mid-stage 136 feet, the width and length were in the proportion of 3 to 4. Before the stage was an open space, from which the seats arose in a slant. The wooden boards of the walls were placed vertically instead of horizontally.

More directly derived from the Greek theatres are the semi-circular or semi-octagonal lecture rooms so common at our universities. These have their seats arranged on slopes that act like isacoustic curves; the roof is generally low rather than high; and the rise of the seats toward the ceiling makes the sound waves converge, and increases the hearing power in the rear.

The modern theatrical architect is confronted with several problems. The slope of the floor cannot be made as steep as it should be, though the floor could often be given more of an isacoustic structure than it usually has, to avoid "dead" places. The balconies must have their upward slope, though their under sides should be made to slope downward if possible; tiers of boxes often injure the reflecting power of the side walls; ceiling echo must be avoided; and the absorption of the actor's voice, due to the large space on and above the stage, must be minimized. The actors always aid in the last point by keeping their faces toward the audience, and by speaking near the front of the stage. But even though the performers take these precautions, the scene should be "boxed in" as much as possible, even if the boxing is above the range of vision of the audience. In theatres, the relation of length to height, if correct at one spot, will be incorrect at others. It may be best made by taking the distance to the back of the first balcony in some proportion to the height. The seats under the first balcony, as already intimated, should be given more slope than the floor, if possible. The walls may be pear-shaped rather than semicircular, with the stage corresponding to the stem end, and the side walls straight. The ceiling is usually curved, and joins the walls with an obtuse angle if not an actual rounding. Sometimes the ceiling is made parallel to the floor. Walls nearly or wholly parallel, as in the Metropolitan Opera House, and the Parma theatre, will make it

possible to accommodate a larger number of auditors, the pear-shaped form being best for theatres of moderate size, with restricted sites. The Haymarket Theatre, in London, is an excellent example of this form, the back being slightly more than a semicircle, with straight side walls converging toward the stage. The stage itself is shallow, and extends forward into the house—a most excellent practice, in the present writer's opinion. The ceiling is curved down toward the stage, reflecting the sound excellently. The boxes are flat in front, so as to give partial aid in reflecting the sound. There are no columns. The walls in this theatre are lined with long lengths of thin wood. There are hollow spaces below the floor and above the ceiling. Originally the floor was isolated on strong frames; but that seemed to prevent it from resonating, and the floor is now given the customary structure, as an integral part of the building.

In view of all the difficulties in designing theatres, it is not surprising that many writers confine their attention wholly to this class of buildings.

Law courts form a much neglected class of edifices, from an acoustical point of view. In many cases they are little more than large rooms; but even in these, the proper structure would relieve judge and counsel of some effort. If reverberation is the trouble, as is usually the case, a gallery for draperies on the rare wall will often prove sufficient.

Concert-halls should be fairly easy to construct, in view of the rules now adopted by architects, and described in this article. Any hall that is all bad acoustically will probably be found to violate one or more of the principles enumerated. The dimensions (with length to the middle of the stage) should be multiples of some proportional number; the stage should be recessed, with a roof (or sounding board) rising at the proper angle as it extends forward; the ceiling should join the walls in a curve, and the back wall may join the sides in similar fashion; the ceiling (as also the walls) should not have any deep rectangular recesses; and the back wall should be diversified by a gallery, or entrance doors, or both; or it may be draped if necessary. The whole building should be lined with seasoned wood, in long pieces. There should be hollow spaces below the floor, or the stage, at any rate, and above the ceiling. Promenades outside the walls will have the same good effect. If necessary, the seats may be raised in the proper curve as their distance from the stage increases. Large halls should be oblong, but small ones may be built on the amphitheatre plan, with nearly semicircular auditorium and rising

seats. Symphony Hall and Jordan Hall, both in Boston, are excellent illustrations of the two types. Concert-halls on the half-egg principle are also excellent, Steinert Hall, in Boston, being an example.

The mediaeval cathedrals were chiefly intended for great choruses, or grand ceremonials. In these the music could fill all the air space, which was far too lofty for ordinary speaking. Such edifices, like that at Cologne, contained some small chapels for devotional purposes. But if it became necessary for the preacher to talk to a larger congregation in such a building, he generally had to have a sounding-board placed over him, with a group of pillars as backing. In such a case, as in all halls used for lectures, there will be a certain pitch of voice which will obtain the best effect, this pitch being evidently an overtone of the pitch to which the total mass of air corresponds. The enclosed air thus acts like the air in an organ pipe, which will vibrate to one fundamental pitch, or to any of the stronger overtones of that pitch. A speaker may thus gain gain clear and forcible tones with a minimum of effort, even in a large cathedral.

Churches built with a nave and aisles have often shown acoustical excellence. The nave, or long main body of the church, has its aisles marked off by rows of pillars. These divide the air into several small vibrating masses, which are easily set in motion. Sir Christopher Wren designed many excellent buildings of this sort.

Churches that have one large open space, instead of the nave-and-aisle structure, have seemed more apt to show acoustical defects. If the two sides of the roof are too nearly vertical, they form a sort of sound-destroying trench, and fail to give any helpful resonance. If they are smooth, they may cause too definite an echo or reverberation; so that it has become customary to let the roof timbers show. These defects seem to prove that the Gothic style, in spite of its large size, was based on correct principles, the groups of pillars dividing the air in a way to help the sound. The bad effect of steep roofs in the open church structure may be remedied by a rounded off polygonal ceiling placed some distance below the ridge-pole.

The use of iron in modern churches has enabled architects to call for columns without obstructing the view as much as formerly. The modern tendency, however, has been towards an open space, without columns. The architect of churches should be able to avoid the usual troubles, because he generally has a free hand in regard to area of site. Where a theatre is often

built on restricted ground, surrounded by other buildings, a church is usually placed on an extensive lot.

The position of the pulpit and lectern was formerly influenced by acoustical conditions. Many churches were found to be poor for speaking; and sometimes the defects were remedied by moving the pulpit out among the congregation. At present, with a recessed chancel, this is scarcely ever necessary. The chancel is built on much the same principle as the recessed stage in concert-halls.

The use of transepts has sometimes introduced defects. If the transept is made too deep, and any acoustical trouble arises, the defect may usually be remedied by galleries, or by anything that will make the transept shallow in proportion to its width.

If a gallery is used in the nave, it should be located on the back wall, where it will help to break up any echo effect.

The writer, when in the church of the First Parish in Brookline, has found that this edifice seems to combine many excellences. The chancel is recessed, with the back wall semicircular, and the top low in comparison with the main building. The pulpit and lectern are well in front, each a little to one side of the centre. The transepts, almost as far front as the pulpit itself, are only half as deep as they are wide. The main part of the church has no columns. At the back are three entrances, breaking up the end wall below, and a gallery above, for organ and choir. In this gallery are some of the larger organ pipes, which break the upper surface of the wall. The height to the ridge-pole is scarcely more than the width of the nave. The two sides of the roof slope at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , an excellent angle, which reflects the sound down toward the back of the church, and does so too quickly to cause reverberation. The sides of the roof are lined with wood, extra strips at short intervals breaking up the plane surface. The resonance from this is excellent. At the top of the walls (the base of the roof slopes) two or three tie-rods of iron, provided with turn buckles, neutralize the outer thrust of the roof. The tie-rods are held on each side by beams projecting inward. These beams and tie-rods are evidently sufficient to act as nodes, and let the air-space vibrate in an upper and lower half, instead of as a whole, thus requiring less effort from the speaker. The side walls are plane, with very shallow tapered recesses for the stained glass windows.

Architectural acoustics is not yet thoroughly mastered. If it were, then every modern building would be as perfect as the old Parma theatre. There is still much that is empirical, but



with the rules herein mentioned, and with the ever-present chance to imitate buildings that have shown acoustical excellence, no architect should go wholly wrong.





LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

After the Bust by Franz Klein

1812

# THE MAN BEETHOVEN : AN ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER

By ALEXANDER W. THAYER

Reprinted by permission of The Beethoven Association from advance sheets of the English version of Thayer's "Life of Ludwig van Beethoven." Translated, Revised and Completed by Henry Edward Krehbiel.)

**T**HE year 1800 is an important era in Beethoven's history. It is the year in which, cutting loose from the pianoforte, he asserted his claims to a position with Mozart and the still living and productive Haydn in the higher forms of chamber and orchestral composition—the quartet and the symphony. It is the year, too, in which the bitter consciousness of an increasing derangement of his organs of hearing was forced upon him and the terrible anticipation of its incurable nature and of its final result in almost total deafness began to harass and distress him. The course of his life was afterwards so modified, on the one hand, by the prosperous issue of these new appeals to the taste and judgment of the public, and, on the other, by the unhappy progress of his malady, each acting and reacting upon a nature singularly exceptional, that for this and other reasons some points in his personal character and habits, and a few general remarks upon and illustrations of another topic or two, must be made before resuming the narrative of events.

A true and exhaustive picture of Beethoven as a man would present an almost ludicrous contrast to that which is generally entertained as correct. As sculptors and painters have each in turn idealized the work of his predecessor, until the composer stands before us like a Homeric god—until those who knew him personally, could they return to earth, would never suspect that the grand form and noble features of the more pretentious portraits are intended to represent the short muscular figure and pock-pitted face of their old friend—so in literature evoked by the composer a similar process has gone on, with a corresponding suppression of whatever is deemed common and trivial, until he is made a being living in his own peculiar realm of gigantic ideas, above and apart from the rest of mankind—a sort of intellectual Thor, dwelling in "darkness and clouds of awful state," and making

in his music mysterious revelations of things unutterable! But it is really some generations too soon for a conscientious investigator of his history to view him as a semi-mythological personage, or to discover that his notes to friends asking for pens, making appointments to dinner at taverns, or complaining of servants, are "cyclopean blocks of granite," which, like the "chops and tomato sauce" of Mr. Pickwick, contain depths unfathomable of profound meaning. The present age must be content to find in Beethoven, with all his greatness, a very human nature, one which, if it showed extraordinary strength, exhibited also extraordinary weaknesses.

It was the great misfortune of Beethoven's youth—his impulses good and bad being by nature exceedingly quick and violent—that he did not grow up under the influence of a wise and strict parental control, which would have given him those habits of self-restraint that, once fixed, are a second and better nature, and through which the passions, curbed and moderated, remain only as sources of noble energy and power. His very early admission into the orchestra of the theatre as cembalist, was more to the advantage of his musical than of his moral development. It was another misfortune that, in those years, when the strict regulations of a school would have compensated in some measure for the unwise, unsteady, often harsh discipline of his father, he was thus thrown into close connection with actors and actresses, who, in those days, were not very distinguished for the propriety of their manners and morals. Before his seventeenth or eighteenth year, when he became known to the Breuning family and Count Waldstein, he could hardly have learned the importance of cultivating those high principles of life and conduct on which in later years he laid so much stress. And, at that period of life, the character even under ordinary circumstances is so far developed, the habits have become so far formed and fixed, and the natural tendencies have acquired so much strength, that it is, as a rule, too late to conquer the power of a perfect self-command. At all events, the consequences of a deficient early moral education followed Beethoven through life and are visible in the frequent contests between his worse and his better nature and in his constant tendency to extremes. To-day, upon some perhaps trivial matter, he bursts into ungovernable wrath; to-morrow, his penitence exceeds the measure of his fault. To-day he is proud, unbending, offensively careless of those claims which society grants to people of high rank; to-morrow his humility is more than adequate to the occasion. The poverty in which he grew up was not without

its effect upon his character. He never learned to estimate money at its real value; though often profuse and generous to a fault, even wasteful, yet at times he would fall into the other extreme. With all his sense of nobility of independence, he early formed the habit of leaning upon others; and this the more, as his malady increased, which certainly was a partial justification; but he thus became prone to follow unwise counsels, or, when his pride was touched, to assert an equally unwise independence. At other times, in the multitude of counsellors he became the victim of utter irresolution, when decision and firmness were indispensable and essential to his welfare. Thus, both by following the impulse of the moment, and by hesitation when a prompt determination was demanded, he took many a false step, which could no longer be retrieved when reflection brought with it bitter regret.

It would be doing great injustice both to Beethoven and to the present writer to understand the preceding remarks as being intended to represent the composer's lapses in these regards, as being more than unpleasant and unfortunate episodes in the general tenor of his life; but as they did occur to his great disadvantage, the fact cannot be silently passed over.

A romantically sentimental admiration of the heroes of ancient classic literature, having its origin in Paris, had become widely the fashion in Beethoven's youth. The democratic theories of the French sentimentalists had received a new impulse from the dignified simplicity of the foreign representatives of the young American Republic, Franklin, Adams, Jay—from the retirement to private life on their plantations and farms of the great military leaders in the contest, Washington, Greene, Schuyler, Knox and others, after the war with England was over; from the pride taken by the French officers, who had served in America, in their insignia of the order of the Cincinnati; and even from the letters and journals of German officers, who, in captivity, had formed friendships with many of the better class of the republican leaders, and seen with their own eyes in what simplicity they lived while guiding the destinies of the new-born nation. Thus through the greater part of Central Europe the idea became current of a pure and sublime humanity, above and beyond the influence of the passions, of which Cincinnatus, Scipio, Cato, Washington, Franklin, were the supposed representatives. Zschokke makes his Heuwen say: "Virtue and the heroes of antiquity had inspired me with enthusiasm for virtue and heroism"; and so, also, Beethoven. He exalted his imagination and fancy by the perusal

of the German poets and translations of the ancient and English classics, especially Homer, Plutarch and Shakespeare; dwelt fondly upon the great characters as models for the conduct of life; but between the sentiment which one feels and the active principle on which he acts, there is often a wide cleft. That Beethoven proved to be no Stoic, that he never succeeded in governing his passions with absolute sway, was not because the spirit was unwilling; the flesh was weak. Adequate firmness of character had not been acquired in early years. But those who have most thoroughly studied his life, know best how pure and lofty were his aspirations, how wide and deep his sympathies with all that is good, how great his heart, how, on the whole, heroic his endurance of his great calamity. They can best feel the man's true greatness, admire the nobility of his nature, and drop the tear of sorrow and regret upon his vagaries and faults. He who is morbidly sensitive, and compelled to keep constant ward and watch over his passions, can best appreciate and sympathize with the man, Beethoven.

Truth and candor compel the confession, that in those days of prosperity he bore his honors with less of meekness than we could wish; that he had lost something of that modesty and ingenuousness eulogized by Junker ten years before, in his Mergentheim letter. His "somewhat lofty bearing" had even been reported by the correspondent of the "*Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*." Traces of self-sufficiency and even arrogance—faults almost universal among young and successful geniuses, often in a far higher degree than was true of Beethoven, and with not a tithe of his reason—are unquestionably visible. No one can read without regret his remarks upon certain persons not named, with whom at this very time he was upon terms of apparently intimate friendship. "I value them," he writes, "only by what they do for me. . . . I look upon them only as instruments upon which I play when I feel so disposed." His "somewhat lofty bearing" was matter for jest to the venerable Haydn, who, according to a trustworthy tradition, when Beethoven's visits to him had become few and far between would inquire of other visitors: "How goes it with our Great Mogul?" Nor would the young nobles, whose society he frequented, take offence; but it certainly made him enemies among those whom he "valued according to their service and looked upon as mere instruments"—and no wonder!

Pierson, in his edition of the so-called "Beethoven's Studien," has added to Seyfried's personal sketches a few reminiscences

of that Griesinger, who was so long Saxon Minister in Vienna, and to whom we owe the valuable "Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn." One of his anecdotes is to the purpose here and may be taken as substantially historical.

When he was still only an attaché, and Beethoven was little known except as a celebrated pianoforte player, both being still young, they happened to meet at the house of Prince Lobkowitz. In conversation with a gentleman present, Beethoven said in substance, that he wished to be relieved from all bargain and sale of his works, and would gladly find some one willing to pay him a certain income for life, for which he should possess the exclusive right of publishing all he wrote; adding, "and I would not be idle in composition. I believe Goethe does this with Cotta, and, if I mistake not, Handel's London publisher held similar terms with him."

"My dear young man," returned the other, "You must not complain; for you are neither a Goethe nor a Handel, and it is not to be expected that you ever will be; for such masters will not be born again." Beethoven bit his lips, gave a most contemptuous glance at the speaker, and said no more. Lobkowitz endeavored to appease him, and in a subsequent conversation said:

"My dear Beethoven, the gentleman did not intend to wound you. It is an established maxim, to which most men adhere, that the present generation cannot possibly produce such mighty spirits as the dead, who have already earned their fame."

"So much the worse, Your Highness," retorted Beethoven; "but with men who will not believe and trust in me because I am as yet unknown to universal fame, I cannot hold intercourse!"

It is easy for this generation, which has the productions of the composer's whole life as the basis of its judgment of his powers, to speak disparagingly of his contemporaries for not being able to discover in his first twelve or fifteen works good reason for classing him with Goethe and Handel; but he who stands upon a mountain cannot justly ridicule him on the plain for the narrow extent of his view. It was as difficult then to conceive the possibility of instrumental music being elevated to heights greater than those reached by Haydn and Mozart, as it is for us to conceive of Beethoven being hereafter surpassed.

In the short personal sketches of Beethoven's friends which have been introduced, the dates of their births have been noted so far as known, that the reader may observe how very large a proportion of them were of the same age as the composer, or still



younger—some indeed but boys—when he came to Vienna. And so it continued. As the years pass by in our narrative and names familiar to us disappear, the new ones which take their places, with rare exceptions, are still of men much younger than himself. The older generation of musical amateurs at Vienna, van Swieten and his class, had accepted the young Bonn organist and patronized him, as a pianist. But when Beethoven began to press his claims as a composer, and, somewhat later, as his deafness increased, to neglect his playing, some of the elder friends had passed away, others had withdrawn from society, and the number was few of those who, like Lichnowsky, could comprehend that departures from the forms and styles of Mozart and Haydn were not necessarily faults. With the greater number, as perfection necessarily admits of no improvement and both quartet and symphony in *form* had been carried to that point by Haydn and Mozart, it was a perfectly logical conclusion that farther progress was impossible. They could not perceive that there was still room for the invention or discovery of new elements of interest, beauty, power; for such perceptions are the offspring of genius. With Beethoven they were instinctive.

One more remark: Towards the decline of life, the masterpieces of literature and art, on which the taste was formed, are apt to become invested in the mind with a sort of nimbus of sanctity; hence, the productions of a young and daring innovator, even when the genius and talent displayed in them are felt and receive just acknowledgement, have the aspect, not only of an extravagant and erring waste of misapplied powers, but of a kind of profane audacity. For these and similar reasons Beethoven's novelties found little favor with the veterans of the concert-room.

The criticism of the day was naturally ruled and stimulated by the same spirit. Beethoven's own confession how it at first wounded him, will come in its order; but after he felt that his victory over it was sure—was in fact gained with a younger generation—he only laughed at the critics; to answer them, except by new works, was beneath him. Seyfried says of him (during the years of the "Eroica," "Fidelio," etc.): "When he came across criticisms in which he was accused of grammatical errors he rubbed his hands in glee and cried out with a loud laugh: 'Yes, yes! they marvel and put their heads together because they do not find it in any school of thoroughbass!'" But for the young of both sexes, Beethoven's music had an extraordinary charm. And this not upon technical grounds, nor solely for its

novelties, always an attractive feature to the young, but because it appealed to the sensibilities, excited emotions and touched the heart as no other purely instrumental compositions had ever done. And so it was that Beethoven also in his quality of composer soon gathered about him a circle of young disciples, enthusiastic admirers. Their homage may well have been grateful to him—as such is to every artist and scholar of genius, who, striking out and steadfastly pursuing a new path, subjects himself to the sharp animadversions of critics who, in all honesty, really can see little or nothing of good in that which is not to be measured and judged by old standards. The voice of praise under such circumstances is doubly pleasing. It is known that, when Beethoven's works began to find a just appreciation from a new generation of critics, who had indeed been schooled by them, he collected and preserved a considerable number of laudatory articles, whose fate cannot now be traced. When, however, the natural and just satisfaction which is afforded by the homage of honest admirers and deservedly eulogistic criticism, degenerates into a love of indiscriminate praise and flattery, it becomes a weakness, a fault. Of this error in Beethoven there are traces easily discernible, and especially in his later years; there are pages of fulsome eulogy addressed to him in the Conversation Books, which would make the reader blush for him, did not the mere fact that such books existed remind him of the bitterness of the composer's lot. The failing was also sometimes his misfortune; for those who were most profuse in their flatteries, and thus gained his ear, were by no means the best of his counsellors. But aside from the attractive force of his genius, Beethoven possessed a personal magnetism, which attached his young worshippers to him and, all things considered, to his solid and lasting benefit in his private affairs. Just at this time, and for some years to come, his brothers usually rendered him the aid he needed; but thenceforth to the close of his life, the names of a constant succession of young men will appear in and vanish from our narrative, who were ever necessary to him and ever ready at his call with their voluntary services.

Beethoven's love of nature was already a marked trait of his character. This was indulged and strengthened by long rambles upon the lofty hills and in the exquisitely beautiful valleys which render the environs of Vienna to the north and west so charming. Hence, when he left the city to spend the hot summer months in the country, with but an exception or two in a long series of years, his residence was selected with a view to the in-

dulgence of this noble passion. Hence, too, his great delight in the once celebrated work of Christian Sturm: "Beobachtungen über die Werke Gottes," which, however absurd much of its natural philosophy (in the old editions) appears now in the light of advanced knowledge, was then by far the best manual of popular scientific truth, and was unsurpassed in fitness to awaken and foster a taste for, and the understanding of, the beauties of nature. Schindler has recorded the master's life-long study and admiration of this book. It was one which cherished his veneration for the Creator and Preserver of the universe, and yet left his contempt for procrustean religious systems and ecclesiastical dogmas its free course. "To him, who, in the love of Nature, holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language," says Bryant. Her language was thoroughly well understood by Beethoven; and when, in sorrow and affliction, his art, his Plutarch, his "Odyssey," proved to be resources too feeble for his comfort, he went to Nature for solace, and rarely failed to find it.

Art has been so often disgraced by the bad morals and shameless lives of its votaries, that it is doubly gratifying to be able to affirm of Beethoven that, like Handel, Bach and Mozart, he did honor to his profession by his personal character and habits. Although irregular, still he was as simple and temperate in eating and drinking as was possible in the state of society in which he lived. That he was no inordinate lover of wine or strong drinks is certain. No allusion is remembered in any of his letters, notes, memoranda, nor in the Conversation Books, which indicates a liking for any game of chance or skill. He does not appear to have known one playing-card from another. Music, books, conversation with men and women of taste and intelligence, dancing, according to Ries (who adds that he could never learn to dance in time—but Beethoven's dancing days were soon over—), and, above all, his long walks, were his amusements and recreations. His whim for riding was of short duration—at all events, the last allusion to any horse owned by him is in the anecdote on a previous page.

One rather delicate point demands a word: and surely, what Franklin in his autobiography could confess of himself, and Lockhart mention without scruple of Walter Scott, his father-in-law, need not be here suppressed. Nor can it well be, since a false assumption on the point has been made the basis already of a considerable quantity of fine writing, and employed to explain certain facts relative to Beethoven's compositions. Spending

his whole life in a state of society in which the vow of celibacy was by no means a vow of chastity; in which the parentage of a cardinal's or archbishop's children was neither a secret nor a disgrace; in which the illegitimate offspring of princes and magnates were proud of their descent and formed upon it well-grounded hopes of advancement and success in life; in which the moderate gratification of the sexual was no more discountenanced than the satisfying of any other natural appetite—it is nonsense to suppose, that, under such circumstances, Beethoven could have puritanic scruples on that point. Those who have had occasion and opportunity to ascertain the facts, know that he had not, and are also aware that he did not always escape the common penalties of transgressing the laws of strict purity. But he had too much dignity of character ever to take part in scenes of low debauchery, or even when still young to descend to the familiar jesting once so common between tavern girls and the guests. Thus, as the elder Simrock related, upon the journey to Mergentheim recorded in the earlier pages of this work, it happened at some place where the company dined, that some of the young men prompted the waiting-girl to play off her charms upon Beethoven. He received her advances and familiarities with repellent coldness; and as she, encouraged by the others, still persevered, he lost his patience, and put an end to her importunities by a smart box on the ear.

The practice, not uncommon in his time, of living with an unmarried woman as a wife, was always abhorrent to him—how much so, a sad story will hereafter illustrate; to a still greater degree an intrigue with the wife of another man. In his later years he so broke off his once familiar intercourse with a distinguished composer and conductor of Vienna, as hardly to return his greetings with common politeness. Schindler affirmed that the only reason for this was that the man in question had taken to his bed and board the wife of another.

The names of two married women might be here given, to whom at a later period Beethoven was warmly attached; names which happily have hitherto escaped the eyes of literary scavengers, and are therefore here suppressed. Certain of his friends used to joke him about these ladies, and it is certain that he rather enjoyed their jests even when the insinuations, that his affection was beyond the limit of the Platonic, were somewhat broad; but careful enquiry has failed to elicit any evidence that even in these cases he proved unfaithful to his principles. A story related by Jahn is also to the point, viz.: that Beethoven only by the urgent

solicitations of the Czerny family was after much refusal persuaded to extemporize in the presence of a certain Madame Hofdemel. She was the widow of a man who had attempted her life and then committed suicide; and the refusal of Beethoven to play before her arose from his having the general belief at the time, that a too great intimacy had existed between her and Mozart. Jahn, it may be observed, has recently had the great satisfaction of being able to prove the innocence of Mozart in this matter and of rescuing his memory from the only dark shadow which rested upon it. This much on this topic it has been deemed necessary to say here, not only for the reason above given, but to put an end to long-prevailing misconceptions and misconstructions of passages in Beethoven's letters and private memoranda and to save farther comment when they shall be introduced hereafter.

# CARMEN

## NOVEL AND LIBRETTO—A DRAMATURGIC ANALYSIS

By EDGAR ISTELE

THE source of "Carmen," Bizet's masterpiece, justly to be termed the most original of French operas, was a novel of the same name, published in 1847 by Prosper Mérimée. This distinguished author, whom Goethe esteemed very highly, prefaced his famous story with Paladas' most ungallant Greek motto: "Woman as a whole is bitter. She possesses but two redeeming moments: one in bed and the other at death." The contents of the novel would certainly seem to justify this pessimistic verdict—which, however, is not meant to be generalized. A "she-devil," as one might designate her, after the famous drama ("Der Weibsteufel") of the Austrian author Schönherr, here plays her game of destruction with the man, until both man and woman are sent to eternity. Mérimée's novel consists of four chapters; the fourth is really only a scientific study on the race of the gipsies; the first and second chapters also, in which Mérimée recounts his meeting with José and Carmen, are of only incidental interest in their description of the characteristics of both. It is the third chapter, an autobiographical confession of José when he was condemned to death, which became the source and the plot of the opera.

Carmen, a Christian name, very common in Andalusia, signifies "garden" or "country-house," and is still met with in this signification as the name of cities in Mexico and Argentine. The diminutive form "Carmencita," which also occurs in the opera, is more frequently used as a woman's name. Mérimée's story certainly depicts an actual occurrence. The truthful portrayal of Andalusian life with all its sympathetic and repulsive features must have sprung from very close observation, and the characteristic psychology of the people can be fully appreciated only by one who has spent some time in Andalusia, the most Spanish of Spanish districts. Of special significance, however, is a feature not mentioned in the later version of the opera: José

is a Navarraise, therefore not an Andalusian. This explains his proud, self-assertive attitude, intolerant of humiliation. Carmen, on the other hand, is a gipsy, both in the novel and in the opera. Thus, although the scene is laid in Andalusia, only the subordinate figures are natives of that district. At the beginning of the novel, Mérimée describes an archæological excursion which he made through Andalusia, in the autumn of 1830, accompanied by a guide from Cordoba. By a spring in a woody ravine, they came across a man of wild appearance, whom the guide at once recognized as the notorious bandit, José Navarro, for whose capture a reward of two hundred ducats had been offered. For the dramatist the most interesting part of this first chapter is the description of José: "A young man of middle height, apparently robust, with a proud but gloomy look. His complexion, which originally must have been beautiful, had been tanned by the sun to a darker color than his hair." And later: "Blond hair, blue eyes, a large mouth, fine teeth, small hands, a fine shirt, a velvet jacket with silver buttons, white leather leggings and a brown horse." This gives us a fairly clear idea of José as a bandit.

In the second chapter Mérimée describes how he met Carmencita, the gipsy, one night on the banks of the Guadalquivir:

She had in her hair a bunch of jasmine, whose blossoms gave forth a most intoxicating perfume. She was dressed plainly, almost poorly, in black, like most of the grisettes in the evening. She was "young, small, well-built, and she had very large eyes." Mérimée says later: I doubt very much whether Carmen was thoroughbred: at any rate she was very much more beautiful than any other woman of her race that I have ever seen.

Generally, as he explains in the fourth chapter, the gipsies are very ugly. After speaking of the Spanish ideal of beauty, Mérimée remarks:

My gipsy could not lay claim to so many merits. Her skin was very nearly of the color of copper. Her eyes were oblong, but most marvelously slit; her lips, a little too thick, were well formed and showed teeth whiter than almonds gleaming through them. Her black hair, perhaps too thick, had the bluish reflection of the raven's wing and was long and glossy. In order not to tire by a lengthy description, I will summarize by saying, that to every fault she possessed was added a good feature, which perhaps proved more effective by the contrast. It was a wild, strange sort of beauty, a face which at first bewildered, but which one never forgot. Especially the eyes, which had a voluptuous and at the same time a wild expression which I have never since found in any human face. 'Gipsy eye, wolf eye,' says a Spanish proverb, which shows good observation. Such a person was Carmen.

Later Mérimée heard that José Navarro, as he was called, or Don José<sup>1</sup> Lizarabengoa, as he really was, was in prison and soon to be executed. He visited the bandit, who told the poet the story of his life after having begged him, if he ever passed through Navarra, to give a medal which José had always worn around his neck to a "good woman" (José's mother) in Vittoria. "Tell her I am dead, but not how I died," he added, deeply moved; then he began his story.

We have thus far made the acquaintance of the two principal characters, José and Carmen, and gained an important dramatic motive in the mention of José's mother, who, though not appearing in the drama, influences the plot. Two remarks which José incidentally makes to Mérimée seem to contain the quintessence of the third chapter, the real Carmen tragedy, or perhaps better, the tragedy of José.

Monsieur, on devient coquin sans y penser. Une jolie fille vous fait perdre la tête, on se bat pour elle, un malheur arrive, il faut vivre à la montagne, et de contrebandier on devient voleur, avant d'avoir réfléchi. (One becomes a rogue without realizing it. A pretty woman makes you lose your head, you fight for her, have a bit of bad luck, are compelled to live in the mountains, and from a smuggler one becomes a robber without reflecting.)

The antecedent history of the Carmen plot in the novel is exceptionally short. Only a few words are to be found in the introduction telling how José became a soldier. The librettists have cleverly shortened these words and woven them almost literally into the dialogue in the third scene of the first act—José's conversation with the lieutenant. Incidentally noting that Micaëla is dressed in Navarraise costume, the lieutenant asks: "Are you a Navarraise?" Whereupon José answers: "And of old Christian family. My name is Don José Lizarabengoa. I was to have become a priest and began my studies, but did not learn anything, for I was too fond of the ball game. One day, after having won, a youth from Alava sought a quarrel with me; I had the better luck (that meant most likely that José either killed his adversary, or wounded him severely) and was forced to leave the country. I became a soldier." Up to this point the antecedent history is the same as in the novel. Mérimée continues: "Within a short time I became a brigadier, and was promised the position of ser-

<sup>1</sup>Don, from the Latin Dominus, at that time a title of nobility. José was of ancient Basque descent and (vieto cristiano) of ancient Christian origin, with neither Moorish nor Jewish blood in his veins,—what most Spaniards of quality pretend to be when quite the contrary is true.



geant, when, unluckily, I was detailed as guard before the cigarette factory in Sevilla." Here the drama sets in.

This libretto was written by the famous Parisian playwrights, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. Each had worked individually until 1860, when they joined forces and achieved great success with their stage works. In addition to the Carmen libretto their texts to the best Offenbach operettas are especially well known; and the original adaptation of the "Fledermaus" was their idea.

I have shown that the two principal characters were taken from Mérimée's novel. On the other hand, the librettists were obliged to invent the character of Micaëla as a substitute for José's mother, who does not appear. This character was necessary for dramatic reasons, in order to create a contrast to Carmen, and, as it were, to personify the voice of the good in José. Nevertheless, one must admit that the figure possesses little individual life and is too obviously brought in only for construction. As for the other principal characters in the opera, the bull-fighter Escamillo (Mérimée's Lucas), the inn-keeper Lillas Pastia, the smugglers Dancairo and Remendado and also the lieutenant (Zuniga), they are all to be found in the novel. The librettists had merely to invent the two unimportant figures of the gipsies and the brigadier. And yet how genuinely theatrical the book of the text has turned out, even though occasional literal expressions are taken from the novel!

Let us single out a few of the principal scenes to show the dramaturgic art of the librettists. Take, for instance, the most important moment of the exposition, Carmen's entry. Observe how dramatic is her introduction. She does not exactly enter alone, nor does she come with the swarm of workers, who precede her like the personal attendants at the state entry of a princess. After all the girls have passed, we hear the soldiers sing: "We do not see Carmencita!" whereupon the workers and young men answer: "There she is! see the Carmencita!" Carmen is thus made conspicuous as a very individual figure, similarly to José, who is not on the stage at the beginning of the opera. At last she appears. The librettists describe exactly the same costume and manner of entry as that described by Mérimée. She has a bunch of acacia in her bodice, and a blossom in the corner of her mouth. Three or four young men enter with her, they follow her, surround her, and speak to her; she flirts and talks with them. José raises his head, looks at Carmen, and then quietly resumes work on the chain. The young men urge Carmen to tell them when she will

love them. Her first words here give us a sharply defined picture of her personality, in contradistinction to the more detailed description in the novel. It is also to be noticed that Carmen does not directly approach José as in the novel; this would not be so effective on the stage. Instead, she is obliged to disclose her character somewhat through her conversation with the young men, and wins time to study more closely the handsome brigadier, whom she has espied at once, and—to entice him. This is expressed in her first very witty and precise answer:

Quand je vous aimerai? Ma fois, je ne sais pas.  
Peut-être jamais, peut-être demain;  
Mais pas aujourd'hui, c'est certain!

This refusal plainly discloses the fact that Carmen has chosen José for her lover of to-day. And still more clearly is this expressed in the following famous "Habanera"—which reveals Carmen's conception of love. Nietzsche says: "Eros, as conceived by the ancients—playfully alluring, malicious, demoniacal, invincible. A veritable witch is necessary for the performance. I know of nothing to be compared with this song." Another feature of dramaturgic significance in the first act is the scene commonly designated as the "tragic moment." In his famous book: "The Technique of the Drama", which was preëminently inspired by Shakespeare's technique, Gustav Freytag writes as follows about the introduction of this "moment":

If at a certain point of the plot something sad, gloomy, or dreadful suddenly occurs which, though quite contrary to that which precedes it, can immediately be recognized as a result of the causative combination of incidents preceding and which the assumption of the plot renders believable—this new instant is to be considered a "tragic moment." The "tragic moment" must therefore possess the three following distinctive features:

1. It must be important and momentous for the hero.
2. It must burst upon one unexpectedly.
3. It must, by means of a chain of subordinate ideas perceptible to the spectator, stand in a reasonable connection with the foregoing action.

These three conditions are fulfilled here. The "tragic moment" in this case is especially caused by the circumstance that, exactly at the moment when José, owing to his mother's letter and the newly sealed love for Micaëla, fancies himself to be protected from Carmen and the "demon," the incident occurs which forms the first link in the chain of his fate—Carmen's business with the knife. Without this episode, the entire following tragedy would be quite inconceivable. To be sure, the "tragic moment" in the

drama is only one of many effects. It can, as is usually the case, appear only once, but it can also be used more frequently in the same play. In "Carmen," for instance, the second "tragic moment" is to be found in the second act. José here has decided to leave Carmen forever, and to remain true to his soldier's honor, when suddenly he is driven to jealousy by the return of the lieutenant. Here the effect is particularly strong owing to the contrast between José's intention and this sudden occurrence, which is so momentous for him. In Greek dramaturgics the term "peripetie" was used for this kind of "tragic moment."

The events of the second act have been sharply worked out by the librettists from single facts taken from the novel, where their course is blurred by all sorts of accessories. The choice of Lillas Pastia's inn as the scene of these events seems a happy one. In the novel the inn does not play an important part: there it is in the house of an old match-making gipsy in the Candilejo Street that Carmen's love-meetings take place, first with José and later with the lieutenant.

The main line of José's development in the novel is this: From a punished brigadier he is degraded to a common soldier, who, however, retains his soldier's honor; through jealousy, he passes to open rebellion against an officer and even to murder of that officer; then, no other choice remaining, he becomes a smuggler. Let us now briefly examine how the novel proceeds, emphasizing those points which the dramatists could use.

José in prison describes his spiritual condition, the regret for his heedless folly, the contempt he felt for Carmen. And yet he could not cease thinking of her; he became sensually intoxicated when he recalled the extraordinary image of her silk stockings with the numerous holes in them; he compared all the women who passed by the prison to Carmen, found none as beautiful as she, and unintentionally inhaled the scent of the acacia blossom. "If there are such things as witches," he says, "then this girl is one." But Carmen also thought of him. She smuggled a loaf of bread and a gold piece into the prison. The bread concealed a strong English file with which he could have filed through the strongest bars, and with the gold piece he could have bought other clothes and escaped. José, however, looked upon desertion as a crime, and the gold piece seemed to him like pay and angered him. After having served his term, he was degraded and put on guard as a common soldier. Here, in front of the colonel's house, where Carmen had been dancing, he first saw her again. She asked him to meet her that same evening at Lillas Pastia's when he came off

duty. Pastia is described as an "old fish-baker, gipsy, as black as a Moor, at whose place many of the city-folk ate fish, especially since Carmen had been in the habit of going there." Carmen at once took José to walk with her, and he returned to her the gold piece, keeping the file, however, as a souvenir. Not having much money just then, Carmen suggested that they consume the gold piece together; and so they bought oranges, bread, sausage, a bottle of Manzanilla, a great quantity of sweets and candied fruit. Then they went to the gipsy's house, and as soon as they were alone Carmen began to dance as if she were crazy and to sing, saying: "You are my Rom! I your Romi!" (in gipsy language, "Rom" means husband, "Romi," wife), and falling on his neck cried: "I will pay my debt according to the law of the gipsies!" The manner in which she paid her debt is pretty plainly alluded to in the novel: "Ah! Monsieur, that day! . . . that day! . . . when I think of it I forget to-morrow!" cried the bandit, who is telling the writer of his life after he has been condemned to death. Carmen and José spent the entire day together, eating and drinking, and there was not a mad prank she left undone. José wished to see Carmen dance. She had no castanets, so she broke the only plate the old gipsy had and danced as if she had had real ones. "One was never bored with this girl; to that I can swear," said José. When evening came, José, hearing the retreat, said to Carmen: "I must return to the barracks." "To the barracks?" she replied disdainfully, "are you a negro slave that fears the stick? You are a real canary bird<sup>1</sup> inside and out. Go, you are a coward!" And José remained, though he knew it meant arrest for him again.

This turn of affairs in the novel, where José has already enjoyed Carmen's favors and fallen a victim to her charm, is most natural. In the drama it was better to let the conflict between soldier's honor and love (which in the novel had occurred much earlier, during José's arrest) occur here, and to allow José to decide to avoid Carmen forever. Meantime we are told that after the first night Carmen already spoke of parting, though she declared that she was "a little in love" with José. However, she said that wolf and dog could not agree for long. He should be happy that she, the veritable devil, had not wrung his neck; he should burn a candle before the Madonna and forget Carmencita, else he would probably finish by hanging on her account. But ultimately Carmen made use of José's absolute surrender to win him for the smugglers' band. She described, in a most tempting manner, the romantic life they would lead together on horseback in the moun-

<sup>1</sup>A nick-name for the yellow dragoons.

tains. No officer, no tattoo for him to obey; absolute freedom! He must follow her there if he loved her. Wonderful here, and similar to the parallel seduction scene in the first act, is José's cry, "Carmen!" This cry contains all the nuances of his feelings up to the point where it seems as though he must surrender. But here, where Carmen demands everything, not as in the first act only a small favor—here, where his honor as a soldier is concerned, conscience still is the stronger; he tears himself away and bids Carmen farewell. She tells him she hates him and that parting now means farewell forever. Very well; José has decided to break with her. At this point fate appears: as José is about to open the door, some one on the other side knocks and we hear the voice of the lieutenant calling Carmen. From this moment José is forever at the mercy of the fate which binds him to Carmen, and the incidents urge rapidly forward to the inevitable crisis. The careful manner in which the dramatic entry of the lieutenant is led up to, beginning with the first act, the way in which his untimely arrival occurs exactly on the climax of the last farewell, are admirable, when compared with the chance meeting in the novel. Here one is reminded preëminently of Goethe's exposition in his "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre" (V, 7):

In a novel, opinions and events should be given precedence: in a drama, characters and deeds. The novel must proceed slowly and the sentiments of the principal figures should, in whatever manner it may be, retard the development of the plot. The drama should move quickly and the character of the principal figure should have the tendency to push on to the end, and only then be retarded. The novel hero should be passive, or at least not active in the highest degree: one requires effect and action for the dramatic hero. . . . Therefore it is agreed that chance might play its part in a novel; that, however, such chance must always be controlled and directed by the sentiments of the characters; but that, on the other hand, a Fate which urges people on without their coöperation, by means of disconnected outward circumstances, toward an unforeseen catastrophe, can occur only in a drama; that chance may call forth pathetic but never tragic situations; that Fate, however, must always be terrible, and that it becomes tragic in the highest degree when it involves alike innocent and guilty deeds that are independent of each other.

The further development of the second act seems to me to be an improvement on the novel. In the opera José does not kill the lieutenant. Instead, the officer is disarmed by the smugglers who come at Carmen's bidding. And this change to rogue's humor adds a welcome touch of color to the picture. Moreover, Carmen's death at the close produces a much more thrilling effect if no one has been killed earlier in the drama. The less frequent a

murder, the more terrible its effects. The piling of corpses, of which Shakespeare was so fond, does not appeal to our modern taste.

The events of the third act have very little connection with the plot of the novel, for it was formed quite independently, although many a feature of the original sketch was used. The novel describes a great number of adventures in the smuggler's life. A few characteristic features, in so far as they are of value for a clearer understanding of the act, shall be mentioned here. Carmen served the smugglers as an efficient spy; goods were continually being smuggled from Gibraltar to the coast, then brought up into the mountains, where they were hidden, and later taken to Ronda (a magnificent lofty crag high up in the mountains). It is probable that the third act takes place near Ronda. José maintained that the life of a smuggler pleased him more than the life of a soldier. When he had money and a sweetheart, seldom he felt remorse. (One should observe how cleverly his remorse is awakened in the third act by the appearance of Micaëla.) José was highly esteemed by these people because he had already killed a man, a deed which was looked upon as an act of heroism. At first Carmen was very much in love with him, but would not admit to her comrades that he was her lover; yes, he even had to swear not to say anything about this. José soon learned the reason for this secrecy. For Carmen was married! (This feature was rightly done away with by the librettists.) Her husband, the one-eyed Garcia, a crafty gipsy, had up to this time been a galley-slave. Carmen, who did not lack a certain feeling of faithfulness, despite her love-affairs with José, had succeeded in freeing her husband by captivating the doctor at the citadel. Soon after, Garcia appeared on the scene, and José maintains that he had never met a more shameful scoundrel and that his soul was blacker than his skin. The following incident illustrates Carmen's treacherous character. She wished to lure a rich Englishman to Ronda, where he should suddenly be attacked, robbed, perhaps even killed. José was to arrange it so that Garcia would be in the foreground, where he would serve as a target for the Englishmen, who were good shots, and would probably kill him. José shuddered at the thought of this devilish plan, which Carmen smilingly proposed to him. He answered that though he hated Garcia, he was his comrade and that some day he would free Carmen from him, not by treachery but in an honorable duel. Soon after this conversation, José really provoked a quarrel with Garcia, which ended in a combat with knives, during which José killed his adversary.

This episode served the librettists as a model for the fight between José and Escamillo in the third act. Carmen, on hearing she was a widow, remarked: "His time had come, and yours will also come." José answered: "Yours also, if you are not a faithful wife!" "For all I care!" she cried. "I have often enough seen in the grounds of the coffee that we are to end together.—Bah! come what may!" This feeling of fatalism, which also inspired Bizet with the touching Carmen theme, has been strongly emphasized by the librettists, especially in the third and fourth acts. Without mentioning further incidents in the smuggler's life, let us single out an utterance of Carmen, which is very characteristic of her as she appears in the third act:

Do you know that since you are my husband (Rom) I love you much less than when you were my lover (Minchorro)?<sup>1</sup> I do not like to be tormented, and still more I hate being commanded. I wish to be free and do what I please. Take care not to drive me to desperation; if you begin to bore me, I shall know where to find an obliging youth, who will treat you as you did the one-eyed one.

This is the material from which the librettists have formed the third act. It is not very abundant, and was utilized to a much less degree than that which was at their disposal for the first and second acts. What the librettists had in view with their third act is clear. They wished to sketch a picture of the smuggler's life and José's new existence, and at the same time to show that Carmen, weary of the jealous tyranny of her lover, looks forward with keen anticipation to a new attachment. José, on the other hand, though feeling remorse over his new mode of life, cannot tear himself away from Carmen. The introduction of Mi-caëla and Escamillo into this act, even though their appearance is "opera-like" and but weakly motivated, serves only to this end. This third act is, on the whole, not so well founded, in a dramatic sense, as the preceding ones. The Carmen tragedy draws to its close. The love-affair with the bull-fighter becomes the cause of the catastrophe in the novel as well as in the opera. The dramatists introduced the figure of Escamillo quite early in the plot. In the second act he is kept in suspense by Carmen, while in the third it is quite clear that she has grown tired of José and bestowed her affections on him. In the novel the Picador Lucas (the original model for Escamillo) does not appear until much later. Carmen makes his acquaintance during the bull-fight in Granada. When taken to task by José, she tries to persuade him to accept the

<sup>1</sup>Gipsy lingo.

young fellow as one of the band. José forbids her to speak to the Picador, as he neither needs Lucas nor his money. "Take care!" is Carmen's characteristic answer, "if one suspects me of doing a thing, it soon happens!" In the meantime she seems to have forgotten Lucas. Then, however, José, hearing she had gone to the bull-fights in Cordoba, followed her in a fury. He saw her together with Lucas, and immediately grasped the situation. On this day, however, Lucas met with an accident. His horse stumbled and threw him in front of the bull, thereby endangering his life. Carmen vanished without leaving any trace, but appeared again at two in the morning in their joint lurking-place and followed José without resistance on horseback. They arrived at a lonely inn, near a hermitage, in the morning. That which follows, though differing for the greater part from the drama, none the less evinces a certain similarity. The difference between novel and drama can best be studied at this point. Let us merely outline the most essential moments of the novel:

*José:* Hear me; I will forget everything, and never allude to anything again; but promise to follow me to America and be respectable.

*Carmen* (defiantly): I do not wish to go to America. I am happy here.

*José:* Because you are near Lucas. But let me tell you, when he is cured he will not grow old. But why should I lay hands on him? I am tired of killing your lovers; I will kill you.

*Carmen* (staring at him with a wild look): I have always known you would kill me . . . It is written so.

*José:* Carmencita, do you no longer love me? (She gave no answer, but sat on a mat with her legs crossed, and drew figures in the sand with her fingers.)

*José* (bitterly): We will begin a new life, Carmen; we will live somewhere and never be separated. (He then began to count the money he had with him.)

*Carmen* (smiling): First I and then you. I knew it would be that way (another allusion to Fate).

*José:* Think it over! My patience and strength are exhausted. Decide, or I shall have to.

Then he left her and went to the hermitage, where he had a mass read for a soul which perhaps might soon appear before its Maker. This pious trait in a bandit and assassin is very characteristic of southern ideas. During the mass, however, he remained outside the chapel, and then returned to the inn. He hoped that Carmen might have escaped—she could have mounted the horse and fled to safety. But she was still there. She did not want him to be able to say that she had been afraid. He found her pouring lead, with a sad expression on her face, and singing an



old gipsy song. She again followed him on horseback, and after awhile the discussion was resumed.

*José:* My Carmen, you will come with me, will you not?

*Carmen:* To the grave, yes, but I will not longer live with you. I see that you will kill me, this is written, but you will never force me to yield.

*José:* I beg you to be sensible. Listen! Let all that is past be forgotten! You know it was for your sake alone that I ruined myself. For you alone I have become a robber and assassin. Carmen, my Carmen! Let me save you and myself with you!

*Carmen:* José, you demand the impossible. I no longer love you, but you love me and therefore wish to kill me. I could lie to you, but I will not take the trouble. Between us all is over. As my husband you have the right to kill your wife, but Carmen will always remain free. She was born a gipsy and will die one!

*José:* You love Lucas, then?

*Carmen:* Yes, I loved him, as I did you, a moment only, perhaps less than you. Now I love no one, and hate myself for having loved you.

José threw himself at her feet, seized her hands and covered them with tears. He reminded her of all the happy hours they had passed together. He would remain a robber for her sake, would promise her everything if she would but love him again. She answered, "To love you again is impossible, and I will not live with you." . . . . At this he became furious and drew his knife. He wished she had shown fear and had begged for mercy, but this woman was a demon. "For the last time," he cried, "will you remain with me?" "No! no no!" she cried, and stamping her foot on the ground, drew a ring, which José had given her, from her finger, and threw it into the bushes. At this he stabbed her twice, and with Garcia's knife to boot. She fell at the second thrust without uttering a sound.

I thought (said José) I saw her large black eyes fixed on me again; they became dim and closed. I stood for an hour unnerved before the body; then it occurred to me that I had often heard Carmen say she wished to be buried in the woods. I dug a grave for her with my knife. For a long while I searched for her ring; I found it at last and placed it, together with a small cross, in the grave. Perhaps I did wrong. Then I mounted my horse, rode to Cordoba and gave myself up to the gendarmes. I confessed to having killed Carmen, but refused to tell where her grave was. The hermit was a pious man; he had prayed for her, and had said a mass for her soul! Poor child! The gipsies are to blame; they brought her up that way!

Such is the close of Mérimée's novel, one of the most touching descriptions of the tragic end of a great love. Death and burial in a lonely wood, the hermit's mass. What a picture of poetic

charm! The dramatists, however, had to be relentless. The drama demanded brevity and sharp contrasts, and therefore very few of these poetic features could be utilized. For this reason, the librettists brought the ruined José and the splendidly dressed Carmen together. This created a sharp outward contrast. They let Carmen, by no means in reduced circumstances, but rather as the happy mistress of the brilliant Escamillo, whom she loves in her turn, die at the very moment when her new lover has won a great victory. The tragic feature of the ring (also taken from the novel) which Carmen throws away, is here used as the climax of a short discussion which more and more provokes José. Nietzsche wrote on the margin of his piano score:

Last scene a *dramatic masterpiece*, to study for climax, contrast, logic, etc.—And again, concerning the conclusion of the opera, in the “Case of Wagner”: At last love, love restored to nature! Not the move of a “higher virgin”! No Senta-sentimentality! But love as fate, as fatality, cynical, innocent, cruel,—precisely therein human nature. Love, which in its means signifies war, in its foundation the deadly hatred of the sexes! I know of no other case where the tragic yoke, which is the essence of love, is so sharply expressed, becomes so frightful a formula, as in José’s last cry, with which the work closes:

C’est moi qui l’ai tuée.

Oh! ma Carmen, ma Carmen adorée!

Such an interpretation of love (the only one worthy of a philosopher) is rare; it raises a work of art above thousands of others. For the most part artists are like everyone else, even worse—they misunderstand love.

It is very little known, by most theatre-goers, that the “Carmen” produced on most stages to-day is not in the original form as composed by Bizet. At the first performance of the work at the Théâtre de l’Opéra-Comique,<sup>1</sup> Paris, on March 3d, 1875, it was given as an “opéra comique” in the conventional sense of the word—that is, an opera with spoken dialogue. In this form it has been published in Vol. vii of “Théâtre de Meilhac et Halévy,” in which the intimate relation of the detailed dialogue to the novel may be studied. The completely composed version, with the recitatives, performed on most stages to-day, first sprang into existence after Bizet’s death. The recitatives, musically composed in Bizet’s style, were written by Ernest Guiraud, one of his most intimate friends. Guiraud’s recitatives, the texts of which were presumably shortened and adapted by Meilhac and Halévy, are certainly a little masterpiece. Strange to say, they were

<sup>1</sup>As everyone knows, the idea of “opéra comique” is quite inconsistently employed by the French, and is even applied to tragic works, if they happen to contain spoken dialogue.

composed for the first Vienna performance (Oct 23, 1875) which, as is well known, inspired the success of the work all over the world. "Carmen" had been so coldly received in Paris that Bizet's unexpected early death has frequently been attributed to the Parisian failure. According to information received from the Vienna Opera House management, Jauner, then Director in Vienna, used only a part, to be sure, of the recitatives. Apparently they seemed to him too incomplete, while he retained the dialogue for other scenes. To my great surprise I heard the work in this "Jauner" form in Vienna in 1899. At that time I had no idea that the original version included the dialogue, and mistook the form given for a later adaptation. It was not until May 26, 1900, that Gustav Mahler produced the opera in Vienna with the recitatives only. The revival of "Carmen" in Berlin on Dec. 12, 1891, showed that generally speaking no very clear idea prevailed as to how matters stood. The critics thought *Bizet's* recitatives had been "restored," and found the dialogue "*ridiculous*." Whoever takes pains to study the dialogue will hardly be able to agree with this verdict. On the contrary, the question is, whether it might not be better to return to the original form. To be sure, the completely composed version has the one great advantage, that it allows our opera singers to reach their "effective" numbers more quickly. On the other hand, the plot, as a consequence of this short version, remains in most cases quite unintelligible to those who have not read the novel. It would overstep the bounds of this study were I to compare both versions in detail. Those especially interested in this question may turn to a dissertation entitled "Carmen as a type of musical poetics" (1915), written by a young Berlin philologist, Fritz Hühne. Following my suggestion, Hühne used this theme in taking his Doctor's degree at the University of Greifswald. In this very painstaking study—I regret to say, more scholarly than artistic—Hühne has attempted to show the contrast between both forms in detail, and with characteristic German thoroughness has examined the plot with regard to "idea," "uniformity," and "probability." We can here forget all such philosophico-philological fault-finding, and confine ourselves to an examination of the principal points of the plot in both versions. On the whole, the recitative form in the first act does not produce an unfavorable effect; though occasionally it creates slight improbabilities because of lack of motivation. Take as an example the lieutenant's first question about the cigarette factory. In the dialogue, this is very briefly motivated. He has been only two days with the regiment, and is in Sevilla for the

first time. In the recitative form, on the other hand, the naïf lieutenant, who questions his sergeant about something known all over town, appears positively ridiculous. There are many such passages in "Carmen," but the public has grown so accustomed to absurd opera text-books, that it puts up with anything as long as it hears "beautiful" music.

Guiraud did right to cut out a flirtation episode, in pantomime, which took place between Micaëla's exit and the mounting of the guard, and to replace it with a repetition of the opening chorus. Though set to music by Bizet, this episode checked the dramatic progress and was probably written only in order to give the singer of "Morales" a "grateful" number. It was all the more disturbing, as the public would readily imagine that the episode would have importance in the drama later on. The first law in dramatic art is, never to divert attention from the principal line of action by the insertion of unimportant incidents.

Guiraud's very much shortened adaptation has an unfavorable effect especially in the second act, where the fifth scene between Carmen and José is robbed of many essential features. The original dialogue follows the novel very closely. José has just been at liberty two hours, when Carmen reminds him of the file and the gold piece, with which he could have bought other clothes and escaped sooner. José answers with an allusion to his soldier's honor, and returns Carmen's money. She buys all sorts of good things from Pastia with the gold piece. José tells her that he bore his punishment willingly, because he loved, adored her. She answers that she will pay her debt according to the law of the gipsies. They eat together and Carmen departs herself as if crazy and tells him she has just been dancing for the lieutenant and other officers and that the lieutenant had made her a declaration of love. José is jealous, but she laughs at him, saying that she will dance for him alone. She breaks his plate to use the pieces as castanets, as she cannot find hers at first.

In the *recitative* version we totally miss the really lovable sides of Carmen's character. Such a radical method of blue-penciling robs this scene of very much of its charm. José says he has been in prison two months, but that he bore the punishment willingly because he loves Carmen. Her only answer is that officers were there and that she had been dancing for them. José is jealous, but she pacifies him by saying she will dance for him alone. These proceedings are extremely unnatural, and rob Carmen's character of all sympathetic traits. Her lover comes to her straight from prison, she has not troubled herself about him,

does not even offer him the least refreshment, torments him with jealousy, and then—dances for him. This is apparently nonsense, but nevertheless Carmen is given with this version on most stages, year in year out.

In Mérimée's novel as well as in Meilhac and Halévy's dialogue, Carmen is fickle and wilful, but not of such a bad nature. She is not the "salon-snake" of most of our prima donnas, but a naïve child of the people, who merely follows her primitive instincts. Much of the nonsense about Bizet's Carmen character would never have been written had people taken pains to look at the librettist's original text. While brevity is desirable for the stage, it should never be employed at the expense of all that is characteristic. This scene could easily have been depicted with more detail in the recitative version. Again, owing to Guiraud's brevity, Micaëla's appearance alone in the mountains in the middle of the night becomes quite incomprehensible. The original form called for a guide, who is seen on the rocks shortly before José disappears, and who, after José is gone, calls Micaëla, who approaches cautiously. The guide assures her that he is acquainted with the smugglers' habits. One of them is keeping guard, and therefore it is dangerous to be seen. Micaëla answers she wishes to be seen, as she must speak to one of the smugglers. The guide thinks she is a brave girl, because she had shown no fear when they met the wild steers, which the famous Escamillo was transporting, and now even wishes to go to the gipsies. She answers she is not afraid to be alone, whereupon the guide "naïvely" begs to be dismissed, saying she had paid him well, otherwise he would never have come. He wishes her good luck, but thinks it most extraordinary that she should stroll about here.

In the recitative this entire scene is cut and only a short introduction leads up to Micaëla's aria. I do not consider this to be effective, for her appearance here alone, in the middle of the night, is inclined to produce an "opera-like" effect in the worst sense of the word. Escamillo's sudden entry would also be more effective were it better led up to. In fact, at this point the new adaptation is unquestionably to be condemned. The scenic disposition is also poor. Micaëla's sentimental aria, written only in order to give the singer a "grateful" number, and her appearance in the Finale, savour of make-shift construction.

It is not quite clear to me whether Bizet or Guiraud shortened the duel between Escamillo and José. The librettists have sketched it in detail. Escamillo fights nobly and does not take advantage over José, declaring that he is a bull-fighter and not a

man-killer (rather sentimental for one of his calling). Then José gets the advantage over his adversary as Escamillo slips, and is about to kill him, despite his noble-mindedness, when Carmen saves his life in the nick of time. In the final version the duel takes place quickly in pantomime.

Guiraud inserted a Ballet taken from Bizet's "*Arlésienne*" into the last act, which originally contained only a dialogue between the lieutenant and the gipsies. In this way Frasquita learns many particulars which cause her to warn Carmen. The adaptation here is good, as it does away with the dialogue, which was not absolutely necessary and only interrupted the line of action.

Generally speaking, one can say that despite a lack of motivation which the original Carmen libretto possessed, the book in its present form is one of the most eminent opera-texts to be found. It is a masterpiece, especially in its splendid scenic construction, fine individual characterization, and real contrasts for music.

One of the chief merits of the Carmen subject is that it has no antecedent history. In opera this is generally hazardous, as the public rarely understands the words, and a detailed exposition remains entirely unintelligible. When the curtain rises in "*Carmen*" we are not obliged to know a thing about any of the characters. All we have to learn is that José has an old mother who has chosen Micaëla for his wife, and that he really loves the little country girl. We see this simple bit of antecedent history before our eyes. That Carmen's past is shrouded in mystery adds to her charm as we follow the development of her relations to the different men in the opera. The action is masterfully divided among four acts in such a manner as to place the climax exactly in the middle, at the close of the second act. The close of each act is in its way the climax of a part of the action. In the first two acts Carmen attracts José; in the last two, up to the catastrophe, she casts him off.

It is astonishing how late the recognition of the "*Carmen*" libretto came. Comparatively speaking, Bizet's music was appreciated much earlier than the book of the text. Even before the first performance, the director of the Opéra-Comique begged the librettists to let the opera end "*happily*," because to please the public it should under no circumstances end tragically.

At the first performance other objections began to make themselves manifest: above all, the heroine's character was found fault with. The "*Ménestrel*" of March 7, 1875, says: "The fault with this book is not that it is poorly constructed; on the contrary, it

is full of talent, but none of the characters are interesting." And the "Guide Musical" of March 11th maintains that both the principal characters were "of an antipathetic nature and devoid of interest." In Vienna the libretto was termed "uninteresting," and at the first Berlin performance there were critics who found Carmen's character "repulsive." For a long time, in spite of "Carmen's" growing popularity, one might have heard opinions, especially in "Wagnerian" circles, radically different from that of Nietzsche, who was enthusiastic in his praise and admiration of the opera. He called it an untamed piece of nature. Setting aside the fact that Guiraud decidedly misrepresented Carmen's character at the most critical moments, it was probably the originality and genius of the work which was most painful for the average French and German philistine to bear. For such natures are accustomed to see beautiful wild beasts well guarded in zoölogical gardens, and if they happen to run about free and untamed, the philistines immediately call for the æsthetic police. This elevating spectacle has been the custom for a long time in all European countries. On the other hand, Goethe once declared: "America, you are better off than our old continent." Let us hope that he was right—in this matter as in others.

*(Translated by Janet Wylie Isotel.)*

## WHITHER?

By FRANK PATTERSON

**M**ANY musicians have fallen into the habit of preaching rather loudly that the music of France is the greatest in the world and that France is the greatest of musical nations, an opinion of which the present writer has had the opportunity, during a long residence in France, of observing the gradual growth, even before the war, and the sudden excessive development during the past year or two of peace.

Unfortunately this belief is not isolated, not that of a few, but is rather frequent. Of course, the level-headed French artists preach caution, but others appear so convinced of the manifest truth of this belief that they no longer hesitate to proclaim it, forgetting that "self-praise is no praise." Yet there must be a foundation for this belief, there must be an array of facts that can be placed behind the assertion to support it.

And what is this foundation? Debussy!

Debussy, the great innovator of this century, the man who has performed the wonder of creating a school which all the world follows. Debussy, the inventor of a style, a manner. An iconoclast who set up new idols to worship in place of the old, who mapped a new country, who chartered unknown seas.

Is this fact or fancy? Is it indeed true that Debussy has exercised a universal influence over the music of the day? Undoubtedly!

There are few who have not come, directly or indirectly, under his sway. He was not a great composer. He was not a Bach, a Beethoven, a Wagner. But he was a very definite composer, if I may use the term. He possessed a definite individuality, an unswerving unity of style that is a sure indication of a very strong nature.

And he was French spiritualized, just as Verlaine and Mallarmé were French spiritualized. They are called decadent because they have fallen away from the purely impure, the directly, brutally carnal passions of an earlier generation. Tired scions of their race, they realize the failure of love to bring any real, lasting happiness. The dregs of earthly love are bitter to the



taste—therefore, all things are futile and there is no joy but in dreams of imaginary times, of Hellenic Utopias that had never any more veritable existence than the fables of the ancients or the fancies of poetic folk-lore.

Verlaine and Mallarmé with their Fauns and the pessimistic decadence of their love sonnets, Maeterlinck with the mystic rhapsodies of his early days (the days of his greatness), these are the concrete expression of the soul of Debussy. And we have but to study carefully, to follow up step by step, the development of the arts in France during the past century or century and a half, to note the impractical dreams of a Rousseau, the Utopianism of the Neo-Classicists, the only half concealed carnality of the Romanticists, the exaltations of the Latin-Quarter and Montmartre Bohemians, and in all and through all the courtly self-deception of lace ruffles and queens' antichambers—to realize that Debussy was no new thing, as no great thing is ever new, but a simple step in the world's slow evolution. Just as Bach grew out of the Ecclesiastical School, just as Beethoven arose as the apex of the melodists, just as Wagner was a unified expression of all that came before, with Weber, Beethoven and Schubert as his direct forbears, so Debussy was the pinnacle of French art-growth, not only in music, but in poetry and painting as well.

No one can look at the paintings of the great impressionists, with their vague coloring and their vaguer lines, no one can read the poetry of the Romanticists and their successors, poetry which seems to say so much but which really says so little, and is all the more expressive for that very fact—without understanding on the instant Debussy's place in the scheme of things, how he fits right in with the rest, a mere part of the whole.

But it is a strange thing of these developments that they are, indeed, always a part, never a whole. From them begins a new phase of development which seems at first a retrogression, and that for the reason that these new developments gather up lost threads and to weave them into a tapestry which is atavistic in tendency and design.

It would seem that, though we say, perhaps rightly, that the master founds a school, it is fatal to be his too slavish disciple. This is curiously contradictory, but it is undoubtedly true. The imitators of Beethoven failed one and all, so that even their names are now forgotten. And the imitators of Wagner? Within our own memory they sprang up by tens and dozens. Twenty or thirty years ago, every new opera that was given in Germany, and often enough in France and Italy too, was Wagnerian. I saw

in 1896 or '97, a perfect French "Meistersinger" at the Opéra Comique—and even such a man as Verdi, of Wagner's own age, with nearly his whole career behind him, made his "Falstaff" in the master's own image.

Yet those who took what was best in the Wagnerian plan, benefited by it and through them we see how Wagner has benefited the whole of music, or, at least, the whole of opera. Puccini, for instance, uses the Wagnerian method complete, uses it, having made it his own, uses it to his own advantage and to the advantage of the whole world of music-lovers. He uses a few set pieces just as Wagner did, his accompanied recitative is just as truly dramatic as ever Wagner's was; his harmony is vivid and expressive, and he uses a few well-chosen motives to lend unity to the whole.

But, being Italian, he gives melody to the voices (and may not that be a distinct improvement?) and, being Italian, he has written lighter music than the Bayreuth master and has left the gods and goddesses to the dwellers of the Rhineland. It looks like a retrogression but is not, just as the music of Chopin looks like a retrogression when compared with that of Beethoven but is not, for what it lacks in architectural beauty it makes up for in the strength and freedom of the passion of a less formal era.

Yet "Wagnerian" is a term of many meanings. It is used to express all sorts of things, almost everything, in fact, except what it is, what it has proved to be under the successful touch of Puccini, of Humperdinck, of Charpentier and of many others, i.e., an architectural design, just as all form in music is an architectural design.

It is used, generally, not in praise but in blame, not heartily but sneeringly. To call a work "Wagnerian" is enough to damn it in the eyes of many. It is a term of opprobrium, a reproach, an infamy. Because "Wagnerian" has come to mean heavy, turgid, all too serious, unsuited to the gay after-dinner parties and frivolous social functions of the dress circle. It has come to mean dark stages, mimic storms, gods and goddesses or kings and queens whose emotions move us too much or too little by their depth or their height or their remoteness from mundane hopes and ambitions. Like anything but small-talk and scandal, it is out of place at the dinner table. Give us something gay and adulterous like *Tosca* or *Thais*, which leave our deeper emotions untouched and give us a tickling, tingling delight and a subject for subsequent conversation as to the beauty and attractiveness of the mummery, who are not too far removed from us and through whose disguises we easily penetrate.

But "Wagnerian" is also a term of praise. It was intended so when certain foolish well-wishers dubbed Charpentier, on the occasion of the production of his "Louise," the French Wagner. Yet not without some reason. For if we could possibly imagine Wagner being French we might also imagine him penning something like "Louise." Certain it is that Charpentier emulated the principles of the master in this excellent work and, notably, without any slavish imitation. He did, in fact, in his way, just what Puccini and others have done in their ways.

Vincent d'Indy, on the other hand, and many other French composers before and after him, was Wagnerian in the worst sense of the word. He adopted, notably in "Fervaal," the spirit and the letter of the Wagnerian style. It is a feeble copy of "Parsifal" in which the author proves himself to possess as little ability as a dramatist as invention as a composer. This destruction, annihilation by absorption, of the weaker men is one of the most fatal features of Wagnerianism.

And now we come to another feature which is scarcely less tragic: I allude to the one-work composer. He is one of the most notable manifestations of our time; and he exists in the realm of instrumental music, on the concert-stage, as well as in opera.

How is a Mascagni or a Leoncavallo accounted for, with their single excellent works? And how the dozens, the hundreds, of composers who have started their careers with one or two lovely compositions in lighter vein and then fallen into oblivion?

How account for them? Perhaps an examination of the career of Mascagni, by far the most notable of them all, may furnish a clew. Let us look at his work. We find his *Cavalleria* a bald, unrefined dramatic statement, possessed of neither subtlety nor nobility, yet super-excellent of its kind and of the very soil of Italy. And then, it seems, this composer wanted to be what he was not—a noble ambition in a way, and certainly no one can blame him for it. We find him repudiating his old style altogether and trying to be, am I wrong to say, Wagnerian? At least striving to be big, strong, technically complicated, striving, perhaps, to be recognized as a musician by musicians (and forgetting to write melody).

Leoncavallo? Did he not plan a trilogy to be dedicated to the Kaiser Wilhelm or something of the sort? And Verdi? Can we say that he, too, would not have been led astray had he come under the august influence earlier in his career, since he turned his back on the 'song-opera' when he penned "Falstaff?"

And now the French? Is not the same thing taking place in France on a large scale? The history of French music is a record rather of lightness than of depth. With the very early composers—Couperin, Rameau—we have nothing to do, nor are we concerned with the importations—Gluck, Meyerbeer, Rossini. We might also, omit the name of Berlioz. For he was thoroughly un-French. And was he not one of those unsuccessful successors of Beethoven of whom we have spoken above? Nor was his talent sufficient to assure his lasting success—and it is the successful ones who are copied, copied, often enough, just because of their success.

The others? The real French school? Let us pick out a few at random as memory brings them to mind: Boieldieu, Auber, Bizet, Halévy, Adam, Delibes, Gillet, Méhul, Lecocq, Gounod—all of them successful writers of opera and ballet, all light with the scintillating lightness of France. And the instrumentalists? Lalo, Chausson, Chaminade, Sauret,—Vieuxtemps was a Belgian, so was César Franck. Then there was Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Godard, Messager, d'Indy, and, finally, Debussy.<sup>1</sup>

And where does Debussy belong? Surely, it must be evident at a glance that he does not belong at all! He stands alone, an isolated figure, who belongs rather to the painters and the poets than to the musicians—a curious development which seems to have taken place in poetry and painting while music drifted along untouched by its influence until Debussy burst forth with the glorious song of its emancipation from the old ideals.

It is true that the style of Fauré is somewhat related to that of Debussy and may have influenced it to some small extent. It is also true that there is a certain similarity between the Debussy manner and that of Dukas and Florent Schmitt, and, in a curiously indirect way, certain works of Stravinsky;<sup>2</sup> indeed Debussy has been accused of having borrowed his style from the Russians. (As if any great composer could really borrow anything worth while from anywhere!)

It is obvious, of course, that Debussy's modernism kept pace with other modernism. The whole world of music grew modern, as we call it, after Wagner; some naturally, others with affectation and malice aforethought with the evident object of making up in originality for what they lacked in talent. This development

<sup>1</sup>There were others of course. I have not tried to "list them all" but only to point out the general tendency.

<sup>2</sup>It is amusing to note that a passage in the introduction to "L'Apprenti Sorcier" (Dukas) is almost identical with a passage in Stravinsky's "Fireworks," and that the principal passage of the Dukas piece is strangely like the "Funeral March of a Marionette" (Gounod). So much for relationships!

is in line with what has already been mentioned with reference to the immediate succession of all great musical giants and would be discouraging did not history point out the strictly temporary nature of this sort of illness and the world's rapid recovery from it. It consists in the case of the immediate successors of Wagner, and perhaps in other cases as well, of stealing the bone and leaving the meat. All that these modernists could see for awhile was a freedom from all formal rules, an apparent absence of tonality, an unrestrained use of discords or dissonances, enlarged contrapuntal possibilities, and so on and so forth. What they were blind to, was the firm, healthy, full-blooded flesh that covered this skeleton and made it possible for it to live: the splendid melody, the firm rhythm, the unity and sanity of the whole. They seized upon the dry bones and mistook their janglings and cracklings for the sweetest of music.

And so it is to-day in France. They are overcome with modernism, with the spirit of Wagnerism or Debussyism. They tell themselves, they tell each other, they do not hesitate to tell the world, that the music of France is to-day the greatest of all music. "Désormais la musique française a le droit de réclamer, dans le concert des nations, la place qui lui appartient, et qui est, ne craignons plus de la déclarer, la première"—thus Julien Tiersot in "Un demi-siècle de Musique Française." Henri Collet writes in similar vein. Vincent d'Indy storms bitterly against foreign music on the French concert and opera stage. And so also many others.<sup>1</sup>

Who are these composers of the day who set French music above that of the rest of the world? Tiersot says "that he has been able to cite almost two hundred names of French composers every one of whom deserves to be applauded for his serious qualities, and of this number a large proportion are of the first rank."

But who are these composers? We need surely not bother our heads about Berlioz, Bizet, Bruneau, Chabrier, Gounod, Massenet, Saint-Saëns and others of the older school whom we know not to be of the highest rank (with the possible exception of Saint-Saëns.)

And of the others, the younger school? We have Aubert, Charpentier, Chausson, Dukas, Fauré, d'Indy, Pierné, Rabaud, Ravel and Schmitt, and again we have none that are of the highest class. For the output of those who are really interesting—Aubert,

<sup>1</sup>One writes: "L'école française est à la tête, depuis vingt ans, du mouvement musical" and thus puts a date on it. Another places 1902, first performance of "Pelleas," as the definite beginning of the emancipation.

Charpentier, Dukas, Ravel, Schmitt—is too limited. You cannot make a career and enter for your nation into the musical world-Olympiade with but two works like “Sillages” and the “Habanera” (Aubert) or with one “Louise” (Charpentier) or “L’Apprenti Sorcier” (Dukas) or “Salome” (Schmitt) or the few of Ravel—his “Ondine,” his “Mother Goose Tales,” his “Heure Espagnole,” etc.

Again we are left with just Debussy—and his successors. But who are these successors and whither are they going? Schmitt and Ravel and Aubert we have already mentioned. As to the others, the list is long;—a few may be mentioned: Gabriel Dupont, composer of orchestral pieces and operas, Roger-Ducasse, orchestra and piano works and songs, Raoul Laparra, composer of “La Habanera,” Déodat de Sévérac, Léon Moreau, who wrote an interesting flute concerto, Albert Roussel, Grovlez, Samazeuilh, Caplet, Rousseau, Paray, Milhaud, Koechlin, Rhené-Baton, Gaubert, Fourdrain, Nougues of “Quo Vadis” fame—these and many others furnish the programs of the concerts of the Société Nationale, the Société Musicale Indépendente, the “Oeuvre Inédit,” furnish occasional new works for the large orchestras and for the opera houses of Paris and the smaller cities of France and Belgium.

Of these men too many suffer from the strange disease the symptoms and characteristics of which have already been outlined; the disease of insincerity, of striving to be what one is not, of stretching oneself like a child and saying “I am a giant” and of imagining oneself so in reality. The successful French composers—Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Bizet, Gounod, etc.—were free from this (how can any composer be successful without being free from it?). Even Debussy was nearly (perhaps entirely) free from it. His larger things (with the exception of “Pelléas”)—“L’Après-midi d’un Faune,” “La Mer”—are his best. And, if he strove seemingly to out-Debussy Debussy in the exaggeration of his adopted style, he was, at least, standing on his own legs and not on somebody else’s.

That is not true of the present generation. Whither are they leading? What path do they follow? It is hard to say, but, whatever way it may be, it is certainly not their own, for these vague outpourings, these imitations of greatness, Debussian on the one hand, Wagnerian on the other, could not possibly be natural to anybody. The interesting and deplorable part of it is that many of them evidently have talent and have begun their careers by penning bits of such pure melody that their ability is indisputable. One may well ask what has become of Pierné

since he wrote his charming little "Serenade?" What has become of Louis Aubert since he composed that lovely bit of song entitled "Légende?" What has Paladilhe done since he gave the world "Psyche" and "Mandolinata?" If these and others had been willing to walk in the footsteps of Halévy, Gounod, Bizet, Massenet—but they were not! Paladilhe wrote heavy grand opera and symphonies, Pierné oratorios and symphonic poems, Aubert abstruse, unsingable songs.

The songs of Ravel and Louis Aubert, and, indeed, practically of all of the present generation of French composers, all show the same glaring fault: the accompaniments are lovely, the voice parts nil! That is to say, they are musically attractive but as songs destined to failure. (One of the results of the influence of Wagner. For did anybody ever think of placing the melody—whatever melody there is—entirely in the accompaniment until Wagner pointed the way?) Does Ravel really imagine that the sort of discords he is dealing with at present are likely to add anything to the fame he deservedly won with his "Ondine?"

The influence of Debussy and Wagner, the baneful influence of modernism (which is the natural expression of the few but not of all the world), the desire to be "big," especially bigger than the hated rival, Germany, have pushed out of sight any memory of the true spirit of the French music of the past. Its greatness was its charming spirituality, its lightness, its daintiness, its gaiety, its expressiveness, in other words, of French nature as all the world knows it.

It is true that there is another side of French nature, or rather a more refined, and deeper, variant of this other, which led to Debussy and to the influences, cited above, which were his artistic paternity. But the musicians of the rising generation are not inspired by these influences. They are trying to write chamber music, symphonies, though no French composer (nor Italian, and the French are surely more Latin than Teutonic) has ever eminently succeeded in either of these fields—and their operas are more Wagnerian than either Italian or French. The influence of the successful opera writers of France is wholly absent. "Faust" and "Carmen" are not wholly forgotten but indignantly repudiated (and the works of Puccini are scorned. D'Indy even goes so far as to say that they are "not even well written." In spite of which they regularly draw record audiences at the Opéra Comique). The traditional German claim that France could only write opéra-comique is felt to be the vilest of insults, though the French might well reply that Germany has utterly failed in this line.

But of this the new generation does not think. Massenet, who was the teacher of many of them, is scorned. They must be "great," "big," "symphonic," must cling to Wagner's coat-tails or wear Debussy's old clothes, must be anything but what they are: charming, affable Frenchmen, descendants of Louis XV and Louis XVI, with the gilt and frippery of their furniture, the rococo of their decoration, the spindle-legged delicacy of their chairs and tables, which remind one, somehow, of the fluffiness of toy spaniels—of the "salons" where philosophy was not a subject for turgid thought and furrowed brows but of light and bright conversation—of light loves and gay infidelities, of formal gardens with their statues of mythical beings, of Fauns and Amours, of Psyches, Nymphs and Hamadryads. Why should the French Adonis wish to puff himself out (like Mark Twain's 'Jumping Frog' which could not jump) to imitate the German Hercules?



## TWO UNPUBLISHED LISZT LETTERS TO MOSONYI

By BÉLA BARTÓK<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE economic distress produced by the War in Central Europe has compelled many formerly well-to-do collectors of literary and musical rarities to throw them on the public market or at least to draw public attention to them for the purpose of finding a purchaser. The two hitherto unpublished letters by Franz Liszt belong to this category and form part, together with two unimportant letters of Richard Wagner, of the collection of Mr. E. Z.

The first of the two Liszt letters—both in German—was undoubtedly and the second very probably written by Liszt to his Hungarian compatriot, Michael Mosonyi (1817–1870). Presumably some of the readers of *THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY* have seen the group-picture with Richard Wagner as the central figure, in which Mosonyi attracts the eye by virtue of his native costume. It is not likely that Mosonyi as a composer, was esteemed in strictly Wagnerian circles as highly as he was by Liszt who in 1857 intended to perform Mosonyi's German opera "Maximilian" in Weimar, evidently the opera alluded to in the letter of April 29, 1857. The project came to naught, because Liszt insisted on some changes, whereupon Mosonyi withdrew the score. On the whole, his operas and other compositions remained even in his day confined to Hungary and to-day Mosonyi is practically forgotten as a composer. At the time of Liszt's letter, Mosonyi apparently still adhered to his more German sounding name, Brand.

This letter is eminently characteristic of Franz Liszt. Publicly he certainly was not in the habit of extolling the merits of his works, nor of smarting under the frequent attacks on his works by the opponents of the "Neu-deutsche Schule" who saw in him a brilliant piano virtuoso but an impotent composer and moreover resented his championship of Richard Wagner. Liszt's proudly modest "Ich kann warten" when a disciple of his expressed his

<sup>1</sup>When preparing editorially these prefatory remarks for the printer, I also took the liberty of correcting, in accordance with the indications of the esteemed leader among contemporary Hungarian composers, certain names in Liszt's original text. For instance Rózsavölgyi instead of Liszt's presumably phonetic Rosavögly.—Ed.



F. Th.

K. Pohl

H. v. Kott

unpublished

Bellow

Jensen

Gille

Drasche

Dammisch

Porges

Mosonyi

Rückel

R. Wagner

F. Müller

A. Ritter

1888



indignation over the public indifference of the master's symphonic poems has become famous. The letter to Mosonyi, however, reveals that Liszt, without relinquishing his attitude of *grand seigneur*, in the privacy of his correspondence could show quite human signs of impatience, irritation and disgust. And on the other hand, that he took an equally human pride in his own works, in this case the "Graner Fest Messe" so-called, the mass which he composed (1855) for the dedication of the Cathedral at Gran.

If this letter is of some importance for the history of this famous "Missa solemnis," the second letter, probably also written to Mosonyi, gives us a deeper insight into the history of his "Legende der heiligen Elisabeth." Inasmuch as he says that the score was finished "six weeks ago," September, 1862, would be the date of this undated letter.

From this letter it becomes quite evident that and why Liszt considered the "Legende der heiligen Elisabeth" a contribution to "modern Hungarian music" as much as his previous symphonic poem "Hungaria." Cosmopolitan though he was, he never ceased to consider himself at heart "Hungarian."

The remark about his "answer to Vörösmarty" will become clear if the reader remembers that Vörösmarty (1800-1855) was one of Hungary's greatest poets and in 1846 addressed an Ode to Liszt, which in Breitkopf and Härtel's edition of Liszt's complete works, is prefixed to the symphonic poem "Hungaria."

If Liszt in 1862 for the reasons mentioned in his letter could not accept the call to associate himself with the Budapest Conservatory, no such obstacles seem to have prevented him in 1875 to "get in closer touch again with Hungary." In that year he accepted the directorate of the newly founded national "Ungarische Musik Akademie" and since then spent every year about three months in Budapest as the head of the institute.

# I

## FRANZ LISZT TO MOSONYI

Highly esteemed friend:

It was as a skilled, richly endowed and capable musician and fellow-artist that I first learned to know and appreciate you; and since I have now come to cherish you as a friend, I feel that we are united by ties of affection. Your letter was a source of varied pleasure: first, I was glad to know that you had nearly completed your opera, and that you had finished the work without any contemptible and cowardly concessions, in accordance with your most serious convictions. This is the only road to art: that which leads from the true to the beautiful and elevated, without false hypocrisy or bargaining—Bravo, Brand! I look on you as a

good, honest fellow, an honor to this Ödenburg County of ours! Hold fast to this admirable manner of thinking and acting; since, as you are not lacking in the ability to *do* things, success is sure to crown your efforts, sooner or later. I shall take uncommon interest in going through your opera with you from A to Z, and I shall hold you to your promise to give me this pleasure at the beginning of September, in Weimar. On September third, fourth and fifth, Carl August's jubilee will be celebrated here, and probably some of my mixed compositions (the "Faust" symphony and others) will be performed. I will send you the program and a special invitation later. So come to the festival, and we will then *at once* make all arrangements for the performance of your opera by the end of this year. It goes without saying that you are to take up your quarters with me, where you can work quite undisturbed if you are so minded. You will also meet your poet, Pasqué, with whom I am on quite a friendly footing, in Weimar (as stage manager).

Your letter also contains a strikingly correct criticism of the situation which my many-headed, though, in most cases, most brainless opposition creates for me. If we look at the whole matter calmly, things must happen as they do, since it is just in the course of this fermentation that good matter is separated from the dross. As was the case in the kingdom of Denmark, something in our musical system of management has grown "rotten," the only difference being that, unlike Hamlet, we do not want to allow ourselves to be murdered by "fair Rosenkranz" and "gentle Guildenstern," the truth of the matter being that we really have nothing to do with these busy people; and their impotence, their anger and their envy cannot wound us in the least. When we meet again I can tell you a number of similar incidents which will amuse you—regarding Prague as well, where, as everywhere else, there is no lack of gossip and twaddle. As a document of more than consolatory value for me as regards the attacks to which I have been exposed for years, and will still be exposed for years to come, I am sending you by mail, through Rózsavölgyi [the publisher], a few copies of Richard Wagner's letter. Will you be so kind as to pay Rózsavölgyi the small postal charge involved, since it is safer for me to send the package unstamped, and to distribute a few copies in my name to Baron Anguss, Count Ráday, Doppler, Erkel, and Rózsavölgyi himself. The comparison of the swords with the hilts has been expressed in this letter in a masterly way. Zellner has only printed it in part, but the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in Leipsic published the entire letter in the issue which appeared at Easter.

You, esteemed friend, will not be dissatisfied, I hope, with the changes, facilitations and additions which I have carried out in the last revision of my Mass:



becomes still more elevated, and the final fugues in the *Gloria* and the *Credo* have not been cast in the usual Sechter's mold! The leading motive of the *Agnus Dei*, too, now stands out more independently in the *double-*

•Simon Sechter, 1788-1867, the theorist.—Ed.

*basses* (in your honor!) and the whole thing closes with the motive of the

*Credo*,  which produces an impression of entire unity,

psychic as well as musical. At the performance in Pest, of all by far the most successful, (between ourselves the folk at Prague were too insufficient, the chorus too small, and many among those taking part too little acquainted with the work), I felt that there was something missing there at the close; but not until later, when I had a second copy made, did I find something which I could use. I hope that the score will be printed not later than September, and then you can take it along when you leave here. As regards an intended performance of the Mass in Vienna, my information thus far has come only from newspaper reports.

Do not forget to send me those Hungarian [things of yours]<sup>1</sup> as soon as they appear, as well as the choruses which you have composed to greet Their Majesties. I am eagerly looking forward to your latest works.

My tiresome illness, which forces me to keep to my bed for a few days, because I had left it at too early a time, prevents my furnishing a contribution to Rózsavölgyi's album. I will, however, keep the promise I made Rózsavölgyi, later, when during the course of the summer I once more find myself in the mood to write a serviceable piano piece for him. My orchestral composition, which I am minded to lay aside this year for some time to come, since I have already produced sufficient orchestra music during the past four or five years, now takes up my attention so fully and completely that I can find time for no other work.

On May 15th, I am going to Aachen, which will give a number of domestic and foreign papers an opportunity to revile me. Turanyi visited me here, and after what you had written him concerning me, he appears to be very amicably inclined toward me, so that I am able to count with certainty on a most friendly understanding with him as regards the whole music festival.

Winterberger will probably come to Aachen, and I will deliver your greetings to him there, which will be sure to please him. He has established himself for the entire winter in Rotterdam, where he is quite comfortable. He gave a couple of concerts there together with Singer, who was making a Dutch concert tour.

My excellent and admirable Gross sends his best thanks for your kindly remembrance of him, and will be only too glad to trumpet forth your praises loudly when you bring us your opera. The day before yesterday I saw him playing double-bass in an ent'acte, something which he manages to do quite passably.

Once more my heartiest thanks, my esteemed friend, for your kind letter, and till we meet again at the beginning of September—regardless of all "illwishers," who, like pestilential parasitical plants, make a nuisance of themselves everywhere—let our watchword be: Labor and nobility of thought; and our aim—to serve Art faithfully.

Sincerely your devoted friend,

Weimar, April 29, 1857.

F. Liszt.

Send me your exact address when next you write.

<sup>1</sup>Words to that effect apparently missing in the original.—Ed.

## II

FRANZ LISZT TO MOSONYI (?)

My esteemed friend:

Since I have but this moment written down your name *to be printed*, it seems quite natural for me to write you personally. I am sure that you will hold neither the one nor the other fact against me. I will inform you, first of all, how the incident came about. To the score of the "Legend of Saint Elizabeth," which I finished six weeks ago, I am adding an extended annotation, and am quoting the Plain Song chant of *in festo Santa Elizabeth*:



and that of the Hungarian church song "To Saint Elizabeth," from the seventeenth century:



both of which reached me, thanks to your friendly solicitude and good offices. The Plain Song chant forms the leading motive of the "Legend of St. Elizabeth," and the church song (*Cantico de S. Elizabetha, Hungariae Regis Filis*), appears in connection with the works of charity, immediately before the death of the saint. Matray was obliging enough to write out the entire song for me. It is to be printed exactly in accordance with his autograph handwriting, as a supplement to the score, in which I shall also express my most sincere thanks to the Arch-abbot of Martinsberg, Michael von Rimeli, the Baron von Anguss, the Reverend Father Maurus Czinn (Librarian of the Abbey of Martinsberg), and our admirable Father Guardian of the Franciscans in Pest (whose exact name I beg you will write me when opportunity offers).

As to the work itself, I can only inform you that it is divided into choruses and solos, and contains six numbers complete in themselves, yet interconnected, as follows: 1. The Arrival of Elizabeth in the Wartburg (the Hungarian magnate who accompanies her enters at the very beginning). 2. The Miracle of the Roses. 3. The Knights of the Cross. 4. The Landgravine Sophie—Elizabeth is driven from Wartburg. 5. Elizabeth's Prayer—Chorus of the Poor—Her Death. 6. Solemn Interment of the Saint by Frederick II, the Hohenstauffen. To this must be added the orchestral introduction with the leading motive (E flat, already announced), treated in light and melodic fugal style; as well as a few completed instrumental movements, such as the "March of the Crusade" and an "Interlude" (after No. 5). The time of performance will be, in all, two and a half hours; hence the work will furnish an entire evening concert. Should my wish be realized, this work will, later on, form an integral contribution to a *new Hungarian musical literature*. I think I have already given my answer to Vörösmarty with my symphonic poem, *Hungaria*. Yet there still remain several things for me to say, irrespective as to whether they may be quickly understood and recognized;



some time, when I am no longer on this earth, the rest will find itself. I can calmly await the event while I *go on working*, and meanwhile composedly expiate my virtuoso reputation with the disapproval my compositions have excited.

You know my thoughts in this connection, esteemed friend, and will not take it amiss that I continue to follow my "higher aims" in full career.

In the course of the past few days a special surprise has been my portion. I received a very friendly letter, in the name of the Pest Conservatory, and signed by Baron Pronay, in which I am invited to visit Pest. Unfortunately it is impossible for me to leave Rome this winter, and for the time being I was obliged to excuse myself as best I could to Baron Pronay. Yet omittance is no acquittance; it is mainly a question for which reason, and under which conditions I am to go there. My personal position would have to be carefully considered. The centre of gravity for my musical activity has for several years most decidedly been in my compositions, whose interests at present I can further best and most comfortably in Rome. In addition my obligations as regards the Grand-Duke at Weimar have not ceased.

Quite a while ago the Grand-Duke excused me from all duties connected with my position as conductor, and only last year, shortly before my departure, he made me one of his chamberlains. In accordance with the promise I gave him, and which the Grand-Duke recalls in the most friendly manner in his letters to me, I am pledged, as soon as I leave Rome, to establish myself for the time being in Weimar. I also intend to spend several weeks there next summer and perhaps, if circumstances seem to warrant, to have a performance of "St. Elizabeth" given at the *Wartburg*.

If at an earlier date, say five or six years ago, the matter of conceding me a sphere of activity in Pest had been thought of, it would have been much easier for me, to be frank, to make my arrangements accordingly. Yet I bear them not the slightest ill will because they did not know what they were to think of me, and what they were to do with me. . . .

Most of my acquaintances do not even know to this very day. Only, I must now consider very carefully as regards the acceptance of any proposals, and to what extent I may allow myself to share in them and assume responsibilities. After having directed more than thirty different orchestras, and, especially in Weimar, having functioned as a conductor for full ten years (from '48 to '58), my career as an orchestral leader has also come to an end; although less acceptably than my career as a virtuoso, which I brought to a close once and for all in the year '47, since which time I do not play in public. Possibly, however, sooner or later, something will turn up—perhaps a task like that involved in the *Gran Mass*—which would once more bring me nearer to Hungary. Then I will gladly come (to Pest), and can promise you that I shall bring along no worthless *occasional* music.

Let me hear from you soon, esteemed friend, with regard to your musical labors and, if possible, send me some of your later compositions. In all probability I shall still pass several winters in Rome: do you keep me company mentally in an agreeable and interesting fashion by means of



your works. You know that I shall meet them with an open ear and a sympathetic mind, in which I remain as ever, with sincere sympathy and esteem,

Your devoted friend,

F. Liszt.

P.S. Since but few people are able or inclined to read my scores, I seldom offer them to anyone. However, esteemed friend, should you be able to find time for reading of the sort, I should take pleasure in sending you (through friend Brendel in Leipsic) the "Faust" symphony and the last three symphonic poems to appear.

Will you be so kind as to either give the enclosed letter to Herr von Anguss personally, or else see that it is *sure* to reach him? I do not know where he is at the moment, and am desirous that he have some news of me. In your next letter will you please remember to set down your correct address.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens.)

# MEDICAL MEN WHO HAVE LOVED MUSIC

By FIELDING H. GARRISON<sup>1</sup>

**O**F music, the mathematician LaGrange observed: "*Je l'aime parce qu'elle m'isole.*" He frequently did some of his best work during music. But that was in the eighteenth century.

If a physician, particularly a modern physician, has cared for music at all, at least to the extent of becoming a proficient performer upon some instrument, or an amateur composer, it is usually at the expense of what little leisure he has. He may be what the Spaniards style an *aficionado*, frequenting concerts with the same enthusiasm that tourists at San Sebastian followed the *toreo* or the virtuosity of some *toreador*. If dragged by his wife to musical functions, as a lamb to the slaughter, he may sit them out "in sad civility," his professional sagacity saving him from the affectations of Balzac's critic, who "applauded in the wrong place, blew his nose during the cavatina, and was ever on the lookout to appropriate the sayings of witty men"; or he may be frankly and blankly indifferent, like the character in Turgenieff's story, who said: "If music affects us deeply, it is injurious; if it does not affect us at all, it is tiresome." The doctor of to-day is a busy man; if he is to succeed in his profession he is apt to be an overworked man, like all professionals or industrials in modern life, with the little of the large leisure which people enjoyed in the eighteenth century or in other ages gone by. His hobbies, as a rule, are likely to be of some literary or technical kind more intimately related to the details of his profession. Until recent times, moreover, or at least outside of the Germanic countries, music and the musician did not enjoy the tolerance and esteem which we know of to-day. In antiquity, the "godlike minstrel" of Homer, the long-haired musician (*crinitus Iopas*) of Virgil, the gleeman of the Saxons, the Celtic and German bards with their rhapsodies (the *barditus* of Tacitus), were familiar figures

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted by courtesy from the Bulletin of the Society of Medical History of Chicago, October, 1920.

in the halls and courtyards of the great. Greek music, with its tetrachord and enharmonics, its Doric, Phrygian and Lydian modes, its double flutes, its strains of psaltery, cymbals and syrinx, was immediately connected with the rhythmic and structural origins of lyric and dramatic poetry, the meters of which were actually stamped on the ground, dance-wise, by Pindar and Sophocles, as they chanted their sublime numbers. The old pentatonic scale of Scotland and Ireland, which gives this music its peculiar, quaint monotony, points to the primitive five-toned instruments of the ancient Celtic bards. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the spinet (virginals), the harp and the harpsichord were much in the hands of the ladies. The contra-bass, the old "hoss-fiddle" of New England and the Protestant countries, was affected by the sterner sex, as affording the ground-bass to psalmody. "Have you played over all your old lessons o' the virginals," says the goldsmith's wife to her daughter in Middleton's comedy; and one recalls the scene in the house of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, where the arch Barbara Grant, at the spinet, puts David Balfour through his paces:

Hae nae I just got the lilt of it?  
Was nae this the tune that ye whustled?

I am Miss Grant, sib to the Advocate,  
You, I believe, are Dauvit Balfour.

But, by this time, the musician, like the actor and the surgeon, had become a *déclassé*, almost an outcast. In the seventeenth century Puritanism began its imprisonment of the human spirit for three solid centuries; and, in the middle of the eighteenth century, as humorously documented by Oliver Goldsmith in the episode of Mrs. Tibbs, snobbery, the mean admiration of mean things, arose, and the composer or virtuoso, while tolerated, came to be looked on as a half-menial, who, like the needy parson, might well sit below the salt. Church congregations might marvel at Bach's organ fantasies upon a figured bass, but he lived in comparative obscurity. As Runciman says, "he hardly cared to claim social equality with the citizens who tanned hides or slaughtered pigs; and probably the high personages who trimmed the local Serene Highness's toenails scarcely knew of his existence." Mozart, divine child of genius, was snubbed, insulted and allowed to starve by his patrons, who addressed him in the third person singular, and was once kicked down stairs by an archbishop's lackey. Emerson tells us in "English Traits" that "when Julia Grisi and Mario sang at the houses of the Duke of Wellington

and other grandees, a ribbon was stretched between the singer and the company." Hans von Bülow, Theodore Thomas and others are said to have interrupted musical performances until the talking ceased. Arthur Nikisch once declined to conduct at a private residence at which his players were instructed to enter by the servant's door below stairs. To the noble patron in George Moore's novel, the idea of a professional musician connotes "long hair and dirty hands." The epigram of the poet-composer, Peter Cornelius, summarizes the general bourgeois feeling, that a musician, as Major Pendennis once observed of the family doctor, is not a good *parti* for the daughter of a thrifty Paterfamilias:

Sie sind als Mensch mir ganz scharmant,  
Mir angenehm durchaus;  
Doch sind Sie nur ein Musikant!  
Darum, Hinaus! Hinaus!  
Wär'n Sie Assessor, Rat *in spe*,  
Das säh noch anders aus.  
Doch Musikant—O jemine!  
Hinaus! Hinaus! Hinaus!

In John Galsworthy's recent novel, "Beyond," the relation of the professional musician to married life is worked in detail. Its remorseless realism is evidence of the distance we have travelled since the romantic days of "Charles Auchester" and the sugar-candy fables of Elise Polko. The whole episode of Gyp's unhappy marriage with the sensual violinist Fiorsen brings to focus a world-old problem. The artist, particularly the musical and dramatic artist, is not well fitted for the married state. It is sometimes of the essence of his being that he should be mobile and changeable rather than stable, wild and temperamental rather than staid and reliable; while for the young girl, carefully brought up, the French proverb still remains true: *Une demoiselle n'est pas une grisette*. In other words, artists, if they must mate at all, usually mate best in their own class and kind. But this is a kind of biologic law which applies to all classes and grades of human society; and, other things being equal, it would be difficult to predict that the morals of a given musician might be worse than the morals of a given green-grocer.

It seems strange to read, at this time of day, in the biographic memoirs of the eminent clinician, Henry Ingersoll Bowditch, that his father, Nathaniel Bowditch, a celebrated mathematician, who had translated La Place, actually "gave up playing the flute because at one time it brought him in contact with companions whom he thought undesirable in their morals, and in consequence

of which he denied the study of music to his children."<sup>1</sup> This parochial spirit, an effect of what President Eliot defines as "the Puritan, Genevan, Scotch Presbyterian and Quaker disdain for the fine arts," has been happily obliterated in our own time. Dr. Bowditch, at any rate, did not allow his father's prejudices to interfere with this part of his life.

I could not (he says) stamp out the intense love of music which at my birth was implanted in me. I whistled as a child early, and at all times. My earliest impressions were of the notes I produced; they came as freely as they came from the bobolink who, dancing on the dry mullein stalk, warbles forth his rich notes in our spring days. I rejoiced in my tones as much as the lark does in his, as he 'ascends towards heaven's gate.' My loving mother, being a pious woman, would sometimes say, as I think now, in despair, 'Do for the land's sake (she did not like to say Lord), Henry, stop whistling.' My father would launch poetry at me, and cry: 'He whistled as he went, for want of thought.' Ah, no! How much was he mistaken, for some of the sweetest, divinest thoughts have come to me all my life through music, although incapable of playing at any time or upon any instrument. How shall I ever forget the scornful look which father gave me on one occasion when, fascinated by the music of the Salem Infantry Company (I presume it was the Light Infantry, for surely even I, a little fellow, could never have followed the Republican (Democratic) Cadets of that day), I followed closely, marching with the soldiers up the main street in Salem, and expecting of course that they would turn down Federal or Chestnut streets, and bring me home in time for dinner. I followed them a little way up along the turnpike, still hoping for their return. Finally, as I subsequently found, they were going to Lynnfield Hotel to have a 'good time.' I returned disconsolate, and was met with shocked looks from all. My father seemed to look upon me as contemptible. Alackaday! What troubles music had brought upon me! Nevertheless, I loved it; and though it became a part of my conscience even not to learn on any instrument, I still whistled. I entered college and soon was thrown in contact with my lifelong dear friend, Rev. Mr. Paddidge, of Pepperell, Mass. He played divinely, I thought, on the flute; and we had frequent 'duets' at the open window-seat in old Hollis during my junior year, I whistling the 'first' and he playing 'second' to it. Such dulcet tones attracted the attention of Robert C. Winthrop, a classmate, president of the Pierian Sodality; and being in want of some bass instrument to play on in that body, proposed to me to try the bassoon. What should I do? Conscience said 'Nay.' Love of music said, more strongly, 'Take up the offer.' And so, braving my father's chiding and instructions, I plunged *in medias res*. Imagine me then, not knowing a single musical note, seated in my low-studded room in the upper story of Hollis; but Phoebus! what notes I brought out! 'Whoop!' 'whoop!' and 'whoop!' again, without variation, was all that I could accomplish. I must say that I was thoroughly disgusted with myself and with all mankind about me;

<sup>1</sup>H. I. Bowditch: *Life and Correspondence* (by V. G. Bowditch), Boston, 1902, II, 340-341.

and the next day I politely returned the bassoon to Winthrop, declined the honor of membership to the classic Pierian Sodality, and decided that I was too old to begin then to try to learn new tricks. But music has been all my life long my delight and my inspiration. I have listened (while standing three and a quarter hours in the Sistine Chapel) to the 'Miserere,' and was almost persuaded thereby to become a Catholic. Under the magnificent and grand arches of Westminster I have been thrilled by the magnificent anthem, 'His Body Is Buried in Peace; His Name Liveth Forevermore,' as it was sung before thousands of the great men and women of England, gathered there at the reinterment of the bones of John Hunter, one of the noblest of men, and whose name will float down the centuries as one of the grandest and ever-to-be-remembered disciples of our medical profession.

Thus, gentlemen, I have sketched the trials of my youth; and I compare them with what occurs now. Music is not now necessarily or commonly connected with drunkenness. Music can be the delight of every family, for every child now learns music as a part of the primary education.

Before closing, let me allude to two persons whose influence has been for the last quarter of a century leading up to this blessed result. I allude to John S. Dwight, who, by his 'Journal of Music,' and his very able and always generous criticism, has upheld the divine effect of music on the human mind and heart; and to Henry L. Higginson, who, by his noble generosity, has sustained for so many years the Symphony Concerts, which have in reality educated the present generation to a high appreciation of all that is beautiful and noble in orchestral music.

Dr. Bowditch's wife was a talented singer and performer on the piano and harp, sometimes accompanying the fine voices of her sons on these instruments. Of her playing, he wrote:

Olivia is just playing that most magnificent Funeral March by Beethoven, on the death of a hero. It is one of the times that say to me there is something divine in man. Olivia plays it to my taste exactly. I would like to hear its noble strains at the hour of death. They would give what Herder asked for when dying—noble, great thoughts.

Perhaps the earliest of the great European physicians to follow music as a pleasure or hobby was Felix Plater (1536-1664), of Basel, who made a large collection of instruments, which still exists, played three or four of them, was an accomplished lutanist, and, in his youth, employed his talents in serenading his sweetheart. In the seventeenth century came the learned Jesuit priest, Athanasius Kircher (1602-80), of the old mediæval town of Fulda, who was not only a medical man, but an accomplished mathematician, physicist, optician, microscopist and Orientalist. He was probably the first physician to employ the microscope in investigating the minute organisms causing disease, described "taranism," and made a notable contribution to ethnography in his

splendidly illustrated book on China (*La Chine illustrée*, Amsterdam, 1670), one of the important texts of "sinology." In 1640, he published, at Rome, his *Musurgia universalis sive Ars magna consoni et dissoni in x. libros digesta*, a huge folio of some 1,200 pages, which is a vast summary of all that was known of the theory of music in his time, including the anatomy and physiology of the ear and the throat in man and animals, descriptions and cuts of the different musical instruments, the science of harmony, the physics of the Pythagorean monochord, symphoniurgy or the art of composing melodies, a history of Greek and later music, a long account of chromatics and enharmonics, the theory of time and rhythms in music, in which the rhythms of the Greek, Hebrew and other poets are considered, canon and the art of writing for different instruments. It contains notations of the songs of different birds and the sounds of animals, well executed full-page plates representing various musical instruments, and strange specimens of ecclesiastical and other music of Kircher's time. This work was written at Rome, when Kircher was in residence after 1637, and where, in his museum or "Kircherianum," many of the musical instruments described by him were no doubt to be seen. Kircher also wrote a *Phonurgia nova* (Kempton, 1673). That the learned and versatile priest must have been a performer upon some instrument himself, possibly an organist, may be inferred from the *canzone* by Pompeo Colonna, Prince di Galliciano, which follows the dedication of the *Musurgia* to Leopold, Archduke of Austria:

Signor tu, che fra bellici strumenti,  
Per fare le cure al tuo scettro men gravi,  
Ti volgi ad ascoltar voci soavi,  
Ed empì il cor di musici concenti.

E forte in un mostrando, e mansueto,  
Il nobil seno in simili dilette,  
Fai, ch'in te riconoscano soggetti  
D'Amore, e timor misto un giogo lieto.

Ben e ragion, che se di music'arte  
ATANASIO oggi mai spiega l'ampiezza,  
Al nome tuo, che tanto'l mondo apprezza,  
Suo profondo saper sacri le Carte.

Se'l seguace d'Ippocrate, e Galeno,  
Nel suo curar la musica intendesse:  
E coi suoi studi investigar sapesse  
Le varie note di Natura appieno:

S'avvederia con nostri minor danni,  
Che non si tolgon da contrarj i mali,  
Ma quelle consonanze naturali  
C'ha'l rimedio col mal vedria cogli Anni.

In 1679, the Danish physician, Caspar Bartholinus (1655-1738), son of the famous anatomist, published "*De tibiis veterum*," a study of the double-flutes of Greece, from which the clarinet, the basset horn, the oboe, the English horn, and other woodwind instruments are derived.

In the eighteenth century, Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738), of Leyden, one of the great medical teachers and theorists of his time, is perhaps the first physician on record as cultivating chamber music at his house.

Dr. William Burton says, in his *Life of Boerhaave* (1746):

His application to study was greater in the last ten years of his life than in any space of equal duration from the year 1700. When business was over, he took the exercise of riding or walking, and when weary, revived himself with music, his most delightful entertainment, being not only a good performer on several instruments, particularly the lute, which he accompanied also with his voice, but a good theorist likewise in science, having read the ancient and best modern authors on the subject, as appears by the lectures he gave on sound and hearing, and during the winter he had once a week a concert at his own home, to which by turns were invited some select acquaintances of both sexes, and likewise patients of distinction from other countries.

Leopold Auenbrugger (1722-1809), of Vienna, the discoverer of percussion of the chest in diagnosis, wrote the libretto for "*The Chimney-Sweep*" (*Der Rauchfangkehrer*), an opera of Salieri's which was a great favorite with Maria Theresa. Beethoven often visited the house of Johann Peter Frank (1745-1821), the founder of modern public hygiene. In England, John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), friend and medical adviser of the poet Pope, was a composer of sacred anthems, and one of these, "*As pants the heart*," is in the collection of the Chapel Royal. To him, his colleague, Mead, jestingly said: "I look to you, Arbuthnot, to preserve harmony amongst us." In 1749, Richard Brocklesby (1722-97), one of the founders of military hygiene, published an anonymous treatise recommending music for the cure of diseases. The theme is as ancient as music itself—witness the familiar passages in Homer, Shakespeare and the other poets, Dryden's "*Alexander's Feast*," and "*St. Cecilia*." The medical literature of the subject is extensive. William Withering (1741-99), a Birmingham practitioner who introduced the use of digitalis in heart disease, devoted his leisure hours to the flute and harpsichord, and Edward Jenner



(1749-1823) played both the violin and the flute. Anne Hunter, the wife of the great Scotch surgeon who was Jenner's preceptor, was a patron of music, and wrote the words for Haydn's "Creation," and for his charming canzonet, "My mother bids me bind my hair." But John Hunter himself had no taste or liking for music, as the well-known anecdote makes plain:

On returning home late one evening, after a hard day's fag, Hunter unexpectedly found his drawingroom filled with musical professors, connoisseurs, and other idlers, whom Mrs. Hunter had assembled. He was greatly irritated, and walking straight into the room, addressed the astonished guests pretty much in the following strain: "I knew nothing of this kick-up, and I ought to have been informed of it beforehand; but as I am now returned home to study, I hope the present company will retire." This intimation was of course speedily followed by an *exeunt omnes*.

In considering the many physicians who have been amateurs of music in modern times, it seems an outstanding fact that most of them have been in the class distinguished for original work in the exact sciences upon which medicine is based. The great physiologists, in particular, Helmholtz, Ludwig, Engelmann and others, have been famous as musical enthusiasts. Physiology, as Leonardo da Vinci surmised, is, in the last analysis, a mathematical science. We should not think much of a bank clerk, a musician or a physiologist who could not count. There seems a logical relation between pure mathematics and its musical analogues, harmony, counterpoint and the art of fugue. Saint-Saëns has written very capable papers on astronomy. The thought of the mathematician, Joseph Sylvester, seems apposite:

Herein I think one clearly discerns the internal grounds of coincidence of parallelism, which observation has long made familiar, between the mathematical and musical. May not Music be described as the Mathematic of sense, Mathematic as Music of the reason? the soul of each the same! Thus the musician *feels* Mathematic, the mathematician *thinks* Music—Music the dream, Mathematic the working life—each to receive its consummation from the other when the human intelligence, elevated to its perfect type, shall shine forth glorified in some future Mozart-Dirichlet or Beethoven-Gauss—a union already not indistinctly foreshadowed in the genius and labors of a Helmholtz!<sup>1</sup>

Helmholtz, the greatest mathematical physicist, who was also a medical man, is, in fact, the most prominent of the group of physiologists who have followed music. He was not only a performer and learned connoisseur of music and musical literature, but he was the founder of musical æsthetics as a science, the

<sup>1</sup>Sylvester: Phil. Tr., London, cliv, p. 618, footnote.

author of the most exhaustive treatise on the physiological basis of tonal sensations which has ever been achieved. Musicians themselves, as we know, care little about the scientific import of these things and their æsthetic contributions have been almost entirely of the literary and artistic kind.

Why an octave or a fifth should be more satisfying to the ear than a minor third; why certain chords had a character of their own; what was the physiologic basis of discords; what was the true nature of beats; what was the physiologic significance of the progression of the notes in a melody; what were the physiologic laws, if any, that regulated the development of musical capacity in the human race; all these were questions the musicians cared little about, and if they did allow them to occupy their attention they were dismissed as insoluble. Men took refuge in the notion that music was music because it was adapted to our spiritual nature, and they thought there was little use in endeavoring to examine the physical and physiologic materials of which musical tones were composed.<sup>1</sup>

Helmholtz began to study these things in the fifties, his papers on the physical basis of harmony and dissonance, the theory of open organ pipes, musical temperature, timbre (*Klangfarbe*), the Arabian and Persian scales, etc., culminating, in 1863, in his great work on *Tonempfindungen* or tonal sensations. This work, as is well known, was divided into three parts, of which the first explains the physiologic mechanism of the ear and the way in which sound vibrations and overtones are conducted through the ear to the auditory nerve; the second with the effect upon the nerve itself of tones and combinations of tones, and the third with the psychology of musical æsthetics and the origin of the different scales or modes and harmonies. He divides the historic evolution of music into three periods, viz., the homophonic or univocal music of antiquity and of primitive and Asiatic peoples; the polyphonic or multivocal music of the Middle Ages, and the harmonic music which arose in the sixteenth century and has been prominent in Europe since the time of Bach. These divisions have been used by historians of music to date, and it seems significant that the feudal spirit of the Middle Ages should be typified by massive polyphony; the struggle for freedom of thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by a recognition of the value of melody as well as of thorough bass; and the industrial democratic movement of modern times by the use of the folk-song by Haydn and Beethoven, and the extension, by Wagner and Brahms, of the Greek *melos*, in which the figurations

<sup>1</sup>McKendrick, J. G.: Hermann von Helmholtz, London, 1899, p. 137.

of the accompaniment are sometimes an essential part of the continuous melody.

All his life Helmholtz was an ardent concert-goer and could have been an able critic of music. He was highly appreciative of the admirable performances at the Paris Conservatoire:

At the concert at the Conservatoire we had a Symphony by Haydn, a piece from Beethoven's Ballet of *Prometheus*, and the whole of the music from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as a chorus of Bach, and Händel's *Hallelujah Chorus*. One hears better choral singing in Germany, but the perfection of the orchestra is unique of its kind. The oboes in Haydn's Symphony sounded like a gentle zephyr; everything was in perfect tune, including the high opening chords of the Mendelssohn Overture, which was repeated at the end, and generally sound out of tune. The *Prometheus* was the most enchanting melody, with the horns predominating. This concert, after the Venus of Milo, was the second thing of purest beauty that life can give.<sup>1</sup>

Professor McKendrick, of Glasgow, gives the following impression of Helmholtz at a concert:

The first time the writer saw him was in 1872, in the Gewandhaus, in Leipzig, during a performance of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream." Near the orchestra he saw a head of such splendid proportions, with the eyes having a rapt expression, as the sensuous music floated through the hall, and he thought "that must be Helmholtz!" It could be no other. A few days later he saw the great physicist in his own laboratory, and received kindly advice regarding the ophthalmometer and acoustical apparatus.

Helmholtz had indeed a splendid head of the broad-browed Goethe-Beethoven type, and with the admirable breadth between the eyes which characterizes the mathematician *pur sang*. The phrenologist Gall, who is now recognized as a very able investigator of the anatomy of the brain, located the mathematical sense or *Zahlensinn* (*sens des rapports des nombres*) in the cerebral convolution which, he says, is "a continuation of the lowest convolution of the organ of music, lying against the lateral part of the roof of the orbit in a furrow or depression which lies anteroposteriorly. If this convolution is sensibly developed, the outer border of the roof of the orbit is not curved, but makes an angle, slanting abruptly downward, causing the outer border of the upper eyelid to be sunken and to cover the eye more than ordinarily." This view is born out by the researches of the neurologist, P. J. Moebius, on the hereditary character of mathematical talent.<sup>2</sup> Moebius, after an exhaustive study of typical portraits of eminent mathematicians, locates the mathematical sense in the anterior end of

<sup>1</sup>Koenigsberger, L.: Hermann von Helmholtz, Oxford, 1906, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup>Möbius, P. J.: Ueber die Anlage zur Mathematik. 2. Aufe, Leipzig, 1907.

the third frontal convolution (*gyrus frontalis tertius*). Whatever the value of his theory, the resemblance between many of the mathematical heads in his portraits and those of some of the great composers is very striking, particularly in the breadth of brow produced by widening of the temples and causing the characteristic abrupt straight downward slant of the outer margin of the upper eyelid. There is an equally striking resemblance between the portraits of certain great composers and those of certain eminent medical men who have been devotees of pure science and of music. If we place in juxtaposition characteristic portraits of Beethoven, Rubinstein, the anatomist Henle and the mathematician Jacobi, this resemblance will at once become apparent. By the same token Hyrtle, the anatomist, looks like Haydn; Carl Ludwig in profile is like Liszt or Carl Maria von Weber and *en face* vaguely resembles Chopin; Brahms and Billroth look alike and there are portraits of Sir Richard Owen which resemble certain pictures of Richard Wagner. The theory of Moebius and the points of resemblance in cranial contour and facial features are of course only matters of empirical observation, but at least as striking as the significance of a high brow, a prominent or receding chin, high cheek-bones or deep sunken eyes.

Among the great physiologists who have followed music, the most eminent name after that of Helmholtz is Carl Ludwig of Leipzig, who had over two hundred prominent pupils, most of whom have been the leading teachers of his subject in our own time. One of these pupils refers to his "enchanting personality." He was in fact one of the most attractive of university professors. In relation to music, his rôle was mainly appreciative, but he followed the Gewandhaus concerts and had chamber music at his house. As his pupil von Kries relates:

As a great friend of music he was a constant visitor of the many concerts with which Leipzig abounds, particularly those at the Gewandhaus. But he loved to assemble musical talent at his own home, where he was a thankful and intelligent listener. . . . When the new Gewandhaus at Leipzig was erected and the decorative frescoes of the concert-hall completed, he said to me, with indignation, that if these remained, he would attend the concerts no more. With such paintings in sight, musical enjoyment would be unthinkable. But he did not mean this, and, in any case, reconsidered his decision.<sup>1</sup>

Among the other eminent German professors, Theodor Wilhelm Engelmann, whose name will always be associated with Gaskell's in the physiology of heart muscle, was a friend of Brahms

<sup>1</sup>J. von Kries, Carl Ludwig, Freiburg and Leipzig, 1895, pp. 22-23.

and to him Brahms dedicated his charming string quartet in B flat. Ludimar Hermann, Julius Jacobson (the friend of Graefe), Wilhelm Ebstein, Karl Kahlbaum, the psychiatrist, were all musical, sometimes giving concerts at home. The histologist Henle learned to play the violin, viola and violoncello, so that he could take any part at need in an improvised string quartet. Mikulicz and Neisser were accomplished musicians and *Clavierspieler*, and in their youth, had thought of becoming professional musicians. Max Schultze was a good violinist. Wilhelm His identified the remains of Bach when they were resurrected in the yard of the Joanniskirche at Leipzig and had the sculptor Seffner make a bust of the great composer from his measurements, which turned out to be an admirable likeness. Naunyn, the eminent clinician at Strassburg, overcame a good deal of the prejudice which obtained among the Alsatian population on account of his austere demeanor, through his attractive chamber music evenings, which came to be important social functions in the city. His wife was a talented singer. Julius Jensen, the alienist, also had a talented wife and was often seen with *Notenhefte* under his arms at concerts. Duke Karl Theodor of Bavaria, who became a well-known ophthalmologist, was musical and played in the orchestra. Alfred de Bary, an assistant of Flechsig at Leipzig, is at once a professor of psychiatry and a prominent tenor at Bayreuth and Munich. Borodin, one of the composers of "Prince Igor," was once a Russian army surgeon.

In England, Sir Richard Owen was a talented player on the violoncello. His biographer relates:

He was never tired of listening to his favorite compositions, although as he grew older his taste in music became much narrower, and he could only listen with pleasure to the music admitted to be "classical" in his younger days. Wagner, Grieg, and more modern composers were to his mind "intolerable and not to be endured." The keys of his little old-fashioned piano had been touched by many of his musical friends—Moscheles, John Ella, and Halle, and had served many a time to accompany Jenny Lind and his own famous 'cello by Foster.

Sir Robert Christison (1797-1882), of Edinburgh, who wrote the first treatise on toxicology in English, although self taught in music, was a good bass singer. We read in his memoirs:

As a singer, both as a soloist and in part-songs, Sir Robert took a high place among the amateur musicians of Edinburgh. He was gifted with a bass voice of unusual power and good quality; and although he never had time to take lessons, constant practice in quartet singing and in small musical societies brought his voice to some degree of cultivation. He had only the most cursory knowledge of the science of music and

used to quote, as a signal proof of the low condition of music in Edinburgh thirty years ago, that people regarded him as an authority on music simply because he was rather prominent as a singer in society. Nevertheless, music in Edinburgh owed a good deal to him, as he was one of the first amateurs to disregard and oppose the absurd remnant of Puritanism which caused the cultivation of secular music by societies or clubs to be considered as a somewhat dangerous accomplishment, allied to dissipation. When a number of young men, with some hesitation, met together about thirty-five years ago to form one of the first choral societies in Edinburgh, Sir Robert encouraged them by his presence, and congratulated them on the changed state of opinion which enabled them thus to come forward, contrasting it with the stricter notions prevalent in his youth, when no attempt of the kind could have ventured on.

We are indebted to Dr. Peddie for the following notice of the musical doings in which Sir Robert took a part. "Dr. Christison, Dr. Bennett, Dr. Maclagan, and myself were among the first gentlemen amateur vocalists who ventured to perform publicly in Edinburgh. We had sung much together, and were known as the singing doctors, at parties, and at dinners of the Harveian Society and of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; but it was not till the 20th December, 1851, that we performed in public, at a concert in the original St. Cecilia's Hall, under the patronage of Lord and Lady Murray, for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Mainzer, when about £70 were raised for her. Dr. Christison, Dr. Maclagan, myself, and Mr. John Christison appeared as glee and quartette singers in the Music Hall for the first time on the 27th March, 1863, at a concert for the benefit of the Edinburgh Artisan Rifle Companies. This public appearance of professional men as amateur singers made some sensation at the time. We performed subsequently at several of the annual concerts of the University Musical Society. Dr. Christison was one of the most active and enthusiastic members of the Amateur Vocal Club, from its formation at Dr. Bennett's house on 19 April, 1852, till the final meeting in 1876."

Sir Robert's voice retained much of its power and quality till he was past seventy, and he did not give up taking an occasional share in part-singing for several years afterwards. The last occasion on which he joined in anything of the kind was on the eighty-third anniversary of his birth, when he took the bass part of Bishop's well-known glee, "Mynheer Van Dunck."

On three occasions, Christison was asked by the authorities to exercise the right of patronage in filling the vacated Chair of Music in the University of Edinburgh. In making a crossing from Brighton and Dieppe in his early days, he found that his travelling companions—two English and two Irish doctors and Schetky, a drawing master of the Portsmouth Naval Academy—were musical, so that he was able to improvise a nautical concert:

We had not been long together when we discovered that we were a fortuitous congregation of musical atoms, which soon arranged themselves in harmony. Schetky played excellently Turner's violoncello, Corban played the violin fairly, Crawford the flute well; and Schetky,

Turner, and I found no end of trios for tenor, counter-tenor and bass. Time passed thus very agreeably in spite of baffling breezes, to the high approbation of the ship's company and the steerage passengers, and under the frequent applause of the many vessels which we passed near enough to be within hearing. But, if the whole truth must be told, the harmony of sweet sounds was apt to be frequently and abruptly interrupted by the nautical qualms of Turner and Crawford; and we had the ill-luck, in our fat mate's estimation, to stir up the storm of the 5th in Yarmouth roadstead.

In America, the early history of private and even public interest in music is obscure. Mr. O. G. Sonneck, the learned Chief of the Division of Music in the Library of Congress, has shown that the earliest ascertainable date of a public concert in the country was that advertised in the *Boston Weekly News Letter* of Dec. 16-23, 1731, the next in order of time being the announcement in the *South Carolina Gazette* for Saturday, April 8-15, 1732. After the date of this Charleston concert, there are abundant records of public performances at Charleston, Annapolis, Baltimore, Williamsburg, Va., Fredericksburg, Petersburg, Norfolk, Richmond, Alexandria, Va., Savannah, New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Salem, Newport, Providence, Hartford and other New England cities. The St. Cecilia Society of Charleston, S. C., was originally founded in 1762 as a serious musical club, but after one hundred and fifty years of continuous existence it is now an exclusive association of Charleston's old first families, devoted to assembly halls and other social functions. The musical societies of Stoughton (1786), Concord (1797), and Essex (1797), Massachusetts, followed, and on Jan. 24, 1735, our theatrical season began at Charleston, S. C., with the performance, at the courtroom, of Otway's "Orphan," to be followed on February 18 by our first operatic performance, "Flora, or Hob in the Well," tickets of admission to the courtroom costing 40 shillings each. In these valuable records of early concert-life and early opera in America, which are due to the patriotic zeal and erudition of Mr. Sonneck, we find no note of the participation of physicians,<sup>1</sup> although the colonial group of South Carolina physicians is, according to Dr. Welch, the most brilliant in our early medical history. That some of these at least may have solaced their leisure hours with flute, violin or harpsichord, like Withering or Jenner in Old England, would seem a natural inference. The Pierian Sodality of Harvard University, a gathering of students for mutual improve-

<sup>1</sup>The distinguished author of this article is in error. In these books I mentioned his *quondam* colleague, Dr. Adam Kuhn of Philadelphia, an enthusiastic amateur-musician who attended Governor Penn's musical gatherings in Colonial times.—Ed.

ment in instrumental music, was founded on March 6, 1808. For a number of years, it had from three to fifteen performers, who sometimes serenaded the inhabitants of Cambridge. In 1832 there was only one member, but more than forty in 1880; in 1881 the Sodality fused with the Harvard Glee Club and gave concerts. In 1885, the Sodality was pronounced by the *Boston Herald* to be "foremost among amateur organizations of the land." Independent of the Glee Club during 1898-1904, and tutored by a professional coach, it began to take up the higher forms of music, including the symphonic, about 1907-13, and has now about sixty members. Dr. John W. Farlow, librarian of the Boston Medical Library, played the piano parts with the Pierian Sodality in 1873.<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. James Brown McCaw (1823-1906), of Richmond, Va., who founded the famous Chimborazo Hospital, edited the short-lived *Confederated States Medical and Surgical Journal* (1864-65) and whose son, General Walter D. McCaw, became librarian of the Surgeon General's office, was for many years president of the Mozart Society of Richmond. This isolated record, at the South, like that of Bowditch at the North, may be typical or exceptional. In most "German-American" families music became a household word. Some American physicians and biologists of German descent, such as Drs. Christian A. Herter, Jacques Loeb, Arpad G. Gerster, John C. Hemmeter (composer of "Hygieia," dedicated to Professor William H. Welch), Sidney Kuh, D'Orsay Hecht, Otto Juettner and Gustav Langmann, have been capable performers, or even composers.

Of all medical men who have loved music, the most interesting is Billroth, of all relations between *Minerva Medica* and *Frau Musica*, between Polhymnia and the daughters of Æsculapius, the most alluring is to be found in the musical friendship and epistolary correspondence of Billroth and Brahms. Brahms, the stocky, sturdy, blond Hamburger, who delighted that his picture was given in German school geographies as a representative of the Aryan race, now gruff and repelling, now exquisitely sensitive and tender hearted, now sarcastic and *burschikos*, now charitable in the most stealthy, modest way, incomparably the strongest and worthiest figure in modern German art; Billroth, the stalwart Viking of the North Seas, pioneer of the surgery of the larynx and digestive tract, and greatest German surgeon of his time, grandson of a famous soprano, sensitive and melancholy underneath his calm exterior, a dreamer and a philosopher, a musician

<sup>1</sup>Harvard Musical Review, July, 1913 (Vol. I). From information kindly furnished by Dr. Farlow.



and a poet in his natural instincts, a "sentimental North Sea herring," as he wittily styled himself—these two met at Vienna in the sixties to found something more than a lifelong friendship, indeed a sort of musical brotherhood. At this time, Brahms was conductor of the *Singakademie*; in 1872-4, he was directing the concerts of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, and Edward Hanslick, of Prague, whose essays have the literary charm of Schumann or Liszt, was beginning to make his mark in musical criticism. Brahms, Hanslick and Billroth formed a sort of artistic triumvirate. They were frankly anti-Wagnerian, devoted to the older classical trend of Bach, Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart, and the romantic trend of Schubert, Weber, Schumann and Mendelssohn, which are combined in the music of Brahms. Of this friendship, Billroth's *Briefe*, published after his death in 1895, are a fascinating memorial. I translate most of the passages relating to music below. The first letter in the collection, addressed to Billroth's mother in February, 1850, is an enthusiastic rhapsody of fourteen pages on the singing of Jenny Lind in Göttingen, the whole-hearted self-surrender of a youth of one and twenty. The first letter to Brahms is dated from Zürich, May 17, 1866, the last (Jan. 12, 1894) from Abbazia, where Billroth died on Feb. 6, 1894. In this unique musical correspondence, which ranks with the Schumann letters or the Wagner-Liszt *Briefwechsel* in interest, we are taken into the full current of the musical life of Vienna, the concerts, operas and oratorios, Billroth's piano duets with his friends, and the chamber music evenings, at which Brahms was of course the central figure. Billroth, in spite of his prejudice against Wagner, is everywhere a charming critic of music, beginning with his account of a trial performance of Brahms's Sextet in G major:

*Zurich, June 15, 1866.* I wanted to play second viola, and have got famously in touch with my part; but as I began to play, I found myself trembling with such anxiety and excitement that I could do nothing. Fortunately Eschmann of Schaffhausen, another viola player, was there and took my place. I was terribly vexed and must have cut a farcical figure. The presence of Brahms, the heat of the day, the fact that I had been hard at work since 6 a. m., all contributed to get me in this entirely unaccustomed state of excitement, all the more inexplicable in that I had already taken a part in the Brahms's sextet fourteen days before, when we played it alone at my house. Like an old boy, I had to undergo the bitter experience that it is foolhardy to attempt to execute anything in science or art unless one has mastered the matter in hand. Over and above this experience, I have learned never to play a piece in the presence of the composer unless it has been perfectly prepared beforehand. I had previously written to you about

the second sextet of Brahms in unfavorable terms. Since then I have got to know it better and find it of extraordinary beauty, so clear, so simple, so masterly that one cannot enjoy it enough. Hegar, Eschmann I and II, a cellist from the orchestra, Burkhard and Ganz were the performers. But, as I now knew the piece very exactly, I had a very clear idea of the pains which Brahms must have undergone, although he passed it all off in his most amiable manner. Kirchner, Brahms and Hegar had been carousing freely the night before and were tired; all that helped to make the general mood a languid one.

*Vienna, Dec. 24, 1867.* Brahms becomes the more lovable to me the oftener I meet him. Hanslick says very rightly about him that he has the same faults as Bach and Beethoven: he has too little of the sensuous in his art, both as a composer and player. I believe it is more from an expressed intention to avoid the sensuous than from a lack of it. His Requiem, the first half of which was produced recently, is really so sublime in a supersensuous way, so Protestant, so Bach-like, that it was only carried through with difficulty here. The hissing and clapping became a formal passion, a battle of the factions; finally the applause triumphed. Joachim has been here for two months. I have heard him often, have been with him often and have found him personally most amiable. He is a magnificent creature. When one hears him play the last quartettes of Beethoven, every one must think himself an ass that he did not hold this music the most beautiful in existence. Everything became so clear and simple, so beautifully modelled in his hands, that no one noticed it was being modelled; it went along of itself like the rising of the sun or the moon. When Brahms and Joachim play Beethoven, Bach, Schubert together, the notes are not photographed à la Bülow, but the conceptions appear to the ear as living tone pictures, appear and disappear. It seems to me strange that any one should applaud. This genre does not suit everybody; the modern man, with his peppered palate, will not find it to his taste; but to me it is the highest thing which can be done by reproductive art.

Very different is my impression of Rubinstein, who has given five concerts. He is a highly gifted man, a talent of the first rank, not without originality, but badly educated. His compositions (piano concerto, chamber music) are interesting enough to give one pleasure in their beauties, and to neglect what is ugly or tiresome. So is it, too, with his playing. I have never heard any one play so beautifully, yet never have I seen an artist so belittle the finest things with such frivolity. An innate crudity sometimes becomes unpleasantly apparent, in combination with a grace of execution, an intensity of tone and execution of ravishing effect.

*Vienna, March 29, 1873.* Brahms is very active here as conductor; he has got up incomparable beautiful performances and wins the most cordial recognition from the connoisseurs. His *Triumphlied*, with organ and a colossal chorus, produced a wonderful effect; it is massive, monumental music; its effect being that of a continuously pleasant eerie feeling; at the same time transparently simple in the grandest *al fresco* style. It is certain that nothing quite so considerable has been wrought since Händel. In the last concert Brahms had the hardihood to attempt one of the most difficult of Bach's cantatas with text by Luther (*Christ lag*

in *Todesbanden*). It was damnably tart music (*verdammt herbe Musik*), although of sublime effect here and there. But at the hands of a conductor so highly revered as Brahms, even this was pleasantly received by the Viennese. Two *Volkslieder* by Brahms produced such a storm of applause that it seemed the roof might cave in. The old King of Hanover was half beside himself with musical intoxication. I wish you could hear something like this once; one is really carried away by the beauty of intonation of this choir, its crescendo and decrescendo, its forte and piano, executed as if by one voice. Brahms directs all that as Renz steers a trained horse about in his circus.

*Vienna, Jan. 1, 1875.* Manfred! Ah, but you should have heard and seen it! Reflections are useless, it is indescribable; full-blooded poetry and full-blooded music! It is stunning in a sensuous way; one dreams, one floats in the soft air without effort. The scene of the spirit of Astarte always brings the tears to my eyes; even now, as I think of it, I am thrilled through and through. Such music! "Dost pardon me?" "Manfred, farewell!" "Tomorrow my sorrows end!" If Astarte strikes the right warm tone here and if Manfred is sympathetic, together with a Vienna orchestra and Herbeck as director! I tell you it is maddening. Is it a fortune or misfortune to feel things in this way? For me every new thing we have had lately dwindles by comparison. Especially the great D major Mass of Beethoven, which I have heard for the third time, after studying it beforehand. For me this music is more defunct than the weakest of Bach and Handel. Not that it is specially abstruse! No! But tiresome, insignificant in invention. Tortured, bootless music. Beethoven cannot write for the chorus, except ineffectually; his fugal themes are mostly without effect, and one is so glad when the tortured squalling comes to an end. If people wanted to be honest, most of them would speak as I do. For the professional musician all this is as Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel for the painter. But even for a cultivated musical ear it is dull music, especially for Protestants, who have no youthful poetic associations in mind. . . . I have already heard the Brahms string quartettes seven times this winter, sometimes at home, sometimes in concerts. In our four handed rendering at Carlsbad, we took all the tempi much too fast. Brahms requires everywhere very moderate tempi, because this music, on account of its many harmonic changes, cannot otherwise unfold itself properly; this is essentially true of all complex modern music. Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, Brahms, in all the riper works of their later period, favor the Andante-Tempo which Wagner has called "specifically German." Through Mendelssohn's influence, rapid tempi became too much the vogue; yet there was much less really inward passion in these effects than seemed to us formerly. In any case, I will not permit anything to be said against Mendelssohn.

*Vienna, Aug. 3, 1879.* At this moment my fingers tremble after playing Bach for an hour. That is a tremendous tax for the fingers; for not only each measure, but the whole must be shaped forth like a Gothic stone structure, tall and great. This morning I have given myself up to this music with a kind of passion.

*Vienna, Jan. 4, 1881.* You have naturally heard much through me of Brahms, also of Dvořák, a gigantic talent. If X speaks of him

somewhat pityingly, Brahms says: "I do not understand you; I could almost jump out of my skin with envy at the thoughts which come to this man merely by the way." Dvořák often writes very hastily indeed; in dawdling fashion, but he dawdles à la Schubert; he is now so highly remunerated by his publishers that he is carried, through his easy productivity, into *Vielschreiberei*. Were he younger and had he been discovered earlier, he would undoubtedly have achieved something worth while; but now, whatever he does not achieve successfully by a lucky shot, he does not improve at all by brooding over it. Dvořák's nature is akin to Schubert's, even though he does not come anywhere near him, especially in his songs. . . .

Kirchner has arranged the new Hungarian Dances of Brahms, and also his *Liebeslieder* for two hands. Get these: whoever knows what beauties Brahms has concealed in the middle and counter voices of these things will not find admiration enough for Kirchner's arrangement. . . .

In the plastic arts, aside from the decorative, Vienna has always been very weak. Yet I find the Beethoven monument entirely unique in its beauty, impressively characteristic, very musical, in any case. The art critics may have their objections to the figures around the base; but you must not abuse the statue itself, or I shall be cross with you.

*Vienna, July 27, 1883.* From some indications, it appears that my house was once owned by one of the most famous professors of the period just after Joseph II, Johann Peter Frank. I was satisfied with the probability as far as it went. But Pohl went immediately to the municipal council, burrowed in the dusty property records, and elevated the probability to certitude. The wife of the famous Johann Peter Frank's son, an inconsiderable medical professor, was in her time a famous singer; she sang in the *Creation* and the *Seasons* under Haydn. Through this circumstance, Beethoven came to the house, where musical evenings were often given in the garden, with illuminated scenes from the Italian operas of the time. . . . The interesting thing for me is that Joh. Peter Frank and Beethoven met in my house, and that a similar relation—let us not be arrogant!—obtained between you and me one hundred years later. . . . Beethoven certainly wandered in this direction; must not Haydn, too, have had rehearsals with the above mentioned cantatrice in this house? What a noble triad: Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms!

*Abbazia, Dec. 29, 1884.* People say there are no promenades here. Inconceivable! Along the seashore, in both directions, are excellent roads on which one really finds no hotel guests, though many other can be seen and heard there. "May Night," "On the Lakeside," "On the Lake," "Evening Twilight," "Summer Evening"—all the Brahms melodies stream towards me here. (*Der ganze Brahms klingt mir hier immerfort entgegen.*) I trot along the streets to the measures of the last movement of your F minor quintette, and the third movement of my (I mean his) A minor string quartette brings me back in comfortable time. I can wish nothing better.

*Abbazia, Jan. 8, 1886.* Brahms is in Vienna and lives at IV, Carlsasse No. 4. On the seventeenth of this month his new symphony (E minor) will be produced, after which I give a baptismal dinner. The new work is already known to me from an arrangement for two pianos;

it is very beautiful and grand in conception and execution. That Brahms will yet surpass himself does not seem to me probable from his latest works. Beethoven and Schumann also, and many others of the great, have really had nothing new to say after reaching fifty. Even the most original artist will give out at fifty, if he lives that long; if we have understood his accomplishment up to that time, his later things seem to give us little that is new. At that time, the artist can still conceive things beautiful and great, but gains little by attempting to go beyond the limits of the beautiful *à tout prix* and surpass himself over his own head, as Beethoven, to my feeling, tried to do. A gigantic exception is Haydn, who in the "Seasons," has already assimilated the Mozartian originality to himself and has begun to transform it into a new Haydn species.

*London, Oct. 2, 1886.* Dinner at the hotel and then a charming, but musically very clever, opera, the "Mikado."

*St. Gilgen, Sept. 3, 1888.* Wagner was indeed a very considerable talent in many directions; but if he had not been a Capellmeister for twenty years and learned the whole trade of scenario and scoring in actual practice from his youth up, he could never have brought his ideas to expression. His scores are the product of a refined practical ability and a very healthy, sometimes morbid, over-excited human understanding. He learned the trade of Weber and Meyerbeer. That he has applied his technical experience to the expression of his ideas, and while remaining himself, has stood upon the pedestal erected by others, that is certainly a proof of his highly genial artistic individuality.

*Vienna, Feb. 24, 1890.* (To Professor Engelmann in Utrecht.) You and I stand apart from our university colleagues, since Brahms has dedicated his third string quartette to you and the first two to me. Lately, Joachim was here with his quartette and played yours in B flat. I was almost jealous of you; the effect was colossal. The piece has been repeatedly played here by Hellmesberger, Rosé, Heckmann, etc., but such a clear exposition of this piece, formless in its beginning and so complex in its modelling, I had hardly thought possible. The most difficult rhythmical combinations sounded naturally, as if they could not have been otherwise. Even alongside of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn and Schumann numbers, its success was colossal. The most conservative old sons of music came up to me (here I pass for a Head-Brahmin) with the assurance that they had never understood the quartette until now. And the great glue-boiling public was in ecstasies. The viola movement had to be played *da capo*.

*Vienna, Dec. 18, 1893.* (To Brahms.) Our conversation of yesterday was uncommonly instructive to me; your statistics of to-day, for which I am most thankful, show the extent of your interest. It proves to me, that in any scientific work, one cannot be too careful in getting control of his facts before beginning to reflect. . . . That pieces in a minor key attach themselves easier to us moderns, you will admit; we have the related fact that, in our immediate surroundings, dull soft colors are, on the whole, more agreeable to us than brighter ones. In our youth it was otherwise. Modern man does not like dazzling light effects in his living room. Note the modern preference for painted windows. High sharp voices are unpleasant to us. In the salon, people

speaking in a minor key. . . . My general impression would be that with Händel and Haydn, the major period begins, and that before that time, incidentally in the oldest folk-songs, the minor key is supreme. That this view is incorrect, so far as the folk-songs are concerned, you have lately shown me, even though the minor is more prominent in the Scottish and Swedish folk-songs than in those of other people. . . . All folk-songs in the major, as well as all modern folk-songs in major, easily leave with me a trivial impression, while those in the minor seem *distinguished*. An old melody in the minor seems to me less antiquated than an old melody in the major. . . . What do you think of the following? I have the impression that what you call the "specific physiognomy" (*das eigene Gesicht*) of a composer, and what is otherwise understood to be his specific originality or his novel mode of expression, rests mainly upon new harmonic combinations in the middle voices, otherwise upon the peculiarity of the rhythms employed (Meyerbeer). The cessation of the custom of enhancing the motives by means of variations, and the trick of only repeating them, once they have been set up, seems to me very characteristic of Wagner and the modern French and Italians. In this case the organic growth of the musical compositions ceases immediately; it is more a laying together of the self-same stones, a mosaic or kaleidoscopic effect with unchangeable, multicolored stones. That can be very pretty; but no other enhancement of values is possible except through the intensity of the color effects.

Vienna, Sept. 23, 1893. (To Brahms.) Unfortunately, my dear colleague, N., otherwise so prominent and so widely cultured, is so absolutely unmusical that I can do nothing with him. He likes to hear music, especially singing, and sometimes attends concerts with his musical wife. Yesterday I played to him "Wir winden dir" in F sharp major, with accompaniment in F major. He said immediately, "that is from the *Freischütz*," but made no other remark. Then I played the melody in G major, the accompaniment in F major, and asked him if he noticed any difference. Answer: "I liked the first better." Can you form any conception of such a state of hearing? It would be interesting to make such investigations frequently. As yet, we do not in the least know how far people are unmusical who still get a certain definite pleasure from music as a rhythmic series of sounds.

This investigation was carried out to some extent in Billroth's posthumous essay, "*Wer ist musikalisch?*" which is a kind of miniature pendant to Helmholtz's treatise on tonal sensation. The manuscript, somewhat fragmentary in character towards the end, was turned over, after Billroth's death, to Hanslick, who published it with an introduction. At the beginning, Billroth points out that a sense of rhythm, such as is exhibited by Neapolitans dancing the measures of tarantella to the punctuation of the tambourine, by Egyptian porters moving in processional order to the monotonous rhythms of Arabic verses, by soldiers marching to drum taps, is perhaps the most essential element of a feeling for music. From reports made to him by officers in

various Austro-Hungarian regiments of different racial complexions, he found there are recruits and soldiers who never have, never acquire the sense of rhythm necessary to keep step without watching their comrade's movements. From observations similar to the one mentioned in his letters, he found that there are persons who are rhythm-deaf as well as tone-deaf or harmony-deaf, persons who have learned to play musical compositions in a purely mechanical way, yet are incapable of recognizing the selfsame pieces when they are played by others. The essay is a neat little discussion of the scientific aspects of the subject, in the style of Hanslick, whose biographical memoirs contain, in an appendix, a number of interesting letters from Billroth, Brahms died in 1897, having survived his friend Billroth three years. We may take leave of him in the words of that exquisite critic, James Huneker:

He was the greatest contrapuntist after Bach, the greatest architectonist after Beethoven, but in his songs he was as simple, as manly, as tender as Robert Burns. His topmost peaks are tremendously remote, and glitter and gleam in an atmosphere almost too thin for the dwellers of the plains; but how intimate, how full of charm, of graciousness are the happy moments in his chamber music! . . . Often and purposely he seems to encage himself in a hedge of formidable quickset, but once penetrate it, and you find blooming the rarest flowers, whose perfume is delicious. To me this is the eternal puzzle; that Brahms, the master of ponderous learning, can yet be so tender, so innocent of soul, so fragile, so childlike. He must have vainly protected his soul against earthly smudging to keep it so pure, so sweet, to the very end.

# AMERICAN INDIAN CRADLE-SONGS

By NATALIE CURTIS<sup>1</sup>

**I** HAVE often been asked if a realization of the responsibilities of parenthood dignifies the life of the American Indian. So important, so sacred even, is to the red man the sense of fatherhood and motherhood that the Indian expands the obvious human tie into a mystic, cosmic relation between man and the life-giving forces of Nature. "And man is blessed when in the holy songs the Mountain calls the man 'my son!'" say the Navajos. "Father!" cries the Indian of the Plains when praying before the sacred rock, symbol of the force on which the created universe is builded. "The Evening Star," say the Pawnees, "is the mother of the Pawnee people. In the garden of the Evening Star grew the first corn-plant, the Mother-Corn. And the Evening Star took her daughter, child of the Morning Star, and placed her on a cloud and gave into her hand the Mother-Corn saying 'plant this upon the earth.' And the maiden fell to the earth as falling rain." Thereafter, the division of human labor according to sex is poetically symbolized in terms of parenthood: "The bow and arrow is Father, for the father must defend and protect. But the corn is Mother; it feeds us and gives us life. Take a grain of corn and split it: within will be found mother's milk. So in old days the work of planting and tending the Mother-Corn fell to woman. For she, herself the bearer of seed, is the nourisher, the mother of us all." The woman it was who wove the baskets wherein the garnered corn was carried, who cooked and prepared the sustenance for man. "So," said a Pawnee, "we look upon woman as Mother, always. A man might almost call his own wife 'mother.' For we see in woman the giver of life."

To emphasize the human, intimate side of Indian parentage, the following little group of lullabies is offered as a glimpse into primitive motherhood; for civilization holds no essential human

<sup>1</sup>All Indian songs quoted in this article were collected, translated and written down by the author on the Indian reservations and are copyrighted by her. The Pawnee, Kwakiutl, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Hopi lullabies were originally published in Miss Curtis' collection, "The Indians' Book," Harper and Bros., Publishers. The other songs are here printed for the first time.

In pronouncing Indian texts, vowels are given the continental sound: A=ah· E=ay; I=ee; O=o; U=oo.



ties deeper than those felt by early man. The melodies of these Indian "sleep-songs" are so potently sleep-giving that they may well be found acceptable to the white mother.

I once asked some school-children if they knew why the Indian mother carried her baby on her back. A hand flew up: "Because the Indian mother is always busy with her hands." When the toiling woman went about her many tasks, with her went her baby, bound securely on her back. How often have I seen the little Hopi women of arid Arizona, like burdened ants, climbing up the precipitous trail to their cliff-perched home, a heavy jar of fresh-fetched water on the back, and atop of the jar, the baby. Among some tribes the cradle-board to which the very young infant was often bound was highly ornamented with all the red man's age-old talent for conventionalized symbolic design. The buckskin covering might be richly embroidered with porcupine quill in geometrical cubes and angles of color, and the hood which shaded the baby's eyes festooned with soft feathers and dangling shells for the tiny hands to play with; or the board itself might be painted with protecting emblems of those cosmic forces with which the life of this nature-people is always linked. The Morning Star, clan-emblem of a Pawnee child, formed the chief design of the cradle-board on which were traced the arrow heads which tipped the arrows of the Morning Star for his journey across the sky. The rainbow enclosed the whole. Thus protected, the child might find strength and growth in sleep while the mother lulled it with the soft syllables, "Hau-wari."

## Pawnee Lullaby

"Hau Wa'ri" "Sleep Rocking"

Not too fast: very legato  
M.M. ♩. 80

From Oklahoma

Ha - u . o ha , u - o ha . u o Ha - u - wa - ri,  
ha - u - wa - ri, ha - u . wa - ri, ha - u . wa - ri.

Even as the art of a people reflects—whether consciously or not—the land of which the race is the human expression, so does the very person of the individual suggest the environment which has played upon him. Man must even express Deity in terms of racial art. The Virgin Mother is an Italian, a Fleming, a German,

or even, as in the famous "black Madonna," a mother of dark-skinned men. On the Yuma desert, near the border of Mexico I came one day upon a young Indian girl who—had the American Indian been Christian—might have seemed to a native painter a fitting symbol of Divine motherhood, though she was utterly the child of the untamed land that stretched on every side of her in brilliant orange, red and gold. She was sitting bare-foot on the sand, the folds of her voluminous skirt spread about her like an inverted flower-cup while the desert wind lifted the purple *serape* that flowed from her shoulders. The baby, bound with bright trappings to the cradle-board, made a flash of red across the knee. Flamingo cactus-blossoms flamed behind her. Her loose heavy hair, cut straight across the shoulders with the severity of Egyptian bas-relief, blued and glittered in the sun like the wing of the black-bird on the cactus branch. The desert butterfly, with pattern-painted wing, had taught the mother the art of decoration which glowed in a round spot of red paint on each brown cheek. In a voice as low as the half-heard song of the Colorado (the "Red River" of which the Yuma Indians call themselves "the sons"), the mother was crooning. The rhythmic words "Kashmam," asow'-wa" ("sleep, child"), alternating with a cooing "loo-loo-loo-loo," were strung like colored beads upon a melody whose minor seventh, added to the five-toned scale, sounds a typical modal characteristic of many a Yuma song.

### Yuma Lullaby

'Ash'var' Homar' Tashmatsk" "Song for putting Child to sleep"

With slow, swinging rhythm From Southern Arizona

M. M. J. 69

Na ma ma ma ma ma ma\* ma ma ma ma ma ma As - My

ow-wa ka-shmam, as - ow-wa ka-shmam, as - ow-wa! As - ow-wa! ka-  
lit-tle one sleep, my lit-tle one sleep, my ba-by! My ba-by! oh

shmam, ka-shmam, ka-shmam, as-ow-wa, ka - shmam, as-ow-wa! ka - shmam, as-ow-wa!  
sleep, oh sleep, oh sleep, my lit-tle one sleep, my ba-by! oh sleep, my ba-by!

Loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo ka - oh

shmam, ka-shmam, ka - shmam, as - ow - wa, ka - shmam, as - ow - wal  
sleep, oh sleep, oh sleep, my lit - tle one sleep, my ba - by!

Loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo ka - oh

shmam, ka-shmam, ka - shmam, as - ow - wa, ka - shmam, as - ow - wal  
sleep, oh sleep, oh sleep, my lit - tle one sleep, my ba - by!

\* Meaningless syllables

In contrast to the rounded softness of the desert "sleep-song" sounds the lullaby of the Northwest coast—a single rectangular refrain of four notes cut against the rhythmic beat of the sea along whose shores cluster the villages of the Kwakiutl people of Vancouver Island. Within the wooden houses whose heraldic totem poles point skyward, the baby in its cradle hangs from a cross-beam in the corner. A cord is tied to the cradle, and the mother, her hand or arm within the loop of the cord, rocks the baby with gentle pull, singing. To me, her song seemed to echo the sea, the snatch of melody beating down and drawing back like the monotonous play of waves. For the subconscious influence of the ocean's steady music traces its reflection on the mind as the sea carves ripples on the sand; and one is quick to imagine the reverberation of the sea's voice in the memory of nature-people.

### Kwakiutl Cradle-Song

Slow and crooning  
M.M. ♩ = 40

From Vancouver Island

Swing of cradle

Ha o ha o ha o o Ha o  
Sleep oh sleep oh sleep oh oh Sleep oh

ha o ha o o Ha o ha o  
sleep oh sleep oh oh Sleep oh sleep oh



When the Indian child is taken from the cradle-board, the mother rubs and pulls the little legs and smooths the naked body from head to foot. The parents say that the back and limbs of the baby on the board grow straight. And the children seem happy; they are safe from harm even when the busy mother leans them up against the wall of the house or hangs them from a lodge pole; they cannot fall off of anything or crawl into mischief. Sometimes when the mother is at work outdoors the cradle-board sways from the branch of a tree ("Rockabye baby on the tree-top") and the Arapaho girls who taught me their Sleep-Song said that often just a push from the mother's hand would start the cradle swinging, and then the friendly wind would help, freeing the mother for her work. The word "Bé-hé-bé" (bébé) in the Arapaho language is undoubtedly from the French whose traders often mixed their blood with that of the people of the Plains in the old hunting and trapping days before the Louisiana Purchase.

### Arapaho Lullaby

"Nakahu Naad" "Sleep Song"

In moderate time  
M.M. ♩ = 92

From Montana

Che - da - é na - ka - hu - ka - hu, bé - hé - bé.  
Go to sleep, ba - by dear, slum - ber, ba - by - sleep.

É bé - hé - bé.  
Sleep, ba - by - sleep.

Na - ka - hu - ka - hu, bé - hé - bé.  
Ba - by dear, slum - ber, ba - by - sleep.

Bé bé - hé - bé - hé - bé.  
Sleep, sleep, ba - by - sleep.



## Cheyenne Lullaby

"Meshivotzi No-otz" "Baby Song"

From Oklahoma



On the steep, rocky trails that lead from the level Arizona desert to the *mesa* towns of the sedentary Hopi Indians, the "blind" beetles clamber in the hot sun, the little beetles sometimes sleeping on the backs of their elders—so the children say. The Hopi mother sitting in her stone doorway, swaying gently to and fro, herself a living cradle, tells the baby on her back to be blind like the beetles—to shut its eyes and see no more while she sings "pu'va, pu'va," the Hopi word for sleep.

## Hopi Lullaby

"Puwuch' Táwi"

Not too fast  
M.M. ♩. 52

From Northeastern Arizona

Pu - va pu - va pu - va Ho - ho - ya - wu  
In the trail the bee - ties

shuh - pö pa - ve - e Na - i - kwi - o kiang - o  
on each oth - ers - backs are sleep - ing So on mine my ba - by thou

Pu - va pu - va pu - va Pu - va pu - va pu - va

The devotion of Indian parents is recognized by all who have lived among them. Said a not too sympathetic trader, "Well, I will say *one* thing for the Injuns: if it's anything a man is plum crazy about, it's his kid!" The Indian fathers equal the mothers in their tenderness to the children. From the Indian house in which I lived I used to watch the baby toddle eagerly into the outstretched arms of the home-coming father who would then lift the child over his head with a laugh and dance it in the air to the strange, geometrical ever-changing rhythms of a Hopi Katzina dance-song. The baby on its father's knee was taught its first dance-gestures as the man sang and moved the tiny arms rhythmically, shaking an imaginary dance rattle, invoking rain, or spreading the water over the fields in the symbolic pantomime of the ancient dance-dramas whose traditions the child thus absorbed with its first consciousness.

As often from the voices of men as of women did I hear the soft down-slurring phrases of "pu'va" whose archaic melody had sung babies to sleep on the Hopi *mesas* for uncounted generations. It was a Hopi father—our next door neighbor—who sang the song for my recording phonograph. The "People of Peace" as these Indians call themselves, were friendly toward the "box that sang" and they were always entertained by the squeaky phonographic record of their own robust voices. At the recording of the lullaby there was present a white scholar who was making a study of the Hopi language for a museum. The Indian had scarcely finished singing the last "pu'va" into the phonograph's brass horn when

the scientist ran to the machine, and pushing the Indian aside he laughingly asked the horn in the Hopi language, "What happens, my good friend, when the baby doesn't go to sleep? The Indian stared before him non-plussed while the relentless machine whirled on. Then, too late, when the cylinder was exhausted and I was obliged to stop the wheels, the pondering Hopi tapped his forehead and said, "Why did I not think in time to tell that thing"—pointing to the horn—"My good friend, when that song is sung, the baby *always* goes to sleep!"

But there are times when even "pu'va" fails to lull the Hopi child. A "stop-crying song" for naughty children is supposed to be sung by the Owl-Katzina, a mythological being represented in Hopi ceremonials by a masked dancer. It was a knotted old grandmother, with the baby on her back, who first sang for me the Owl Song. Her cracked voice quavered quaintly, and with laughter wrinkling her eyes she pointed ominously at the imaginary children, crying as they lie awake on their cradle-boards. As she sang, the little black head of the baby on her back bobbed up and down over her shoulder to the rhythm of the sharp little movements with which she emphasized the song. When in the end we caught in the refrain the "mé" of bleating goats and the foreboding hoot of the Owl, we agreed with the little old grandmother that no child could long remain naughty who thus heard the terror of the flocks at the approach of the Owl-Katzina. A young mother was standing near with her baby in her arms. "Hopi children are not bad," I said, "you do not often have to frighten them with the Owl Song?" The girl looked down at the little bundle quietly sleeping against her breast and answered proudly, "*My* baby never even heard that song."

### Hopi Owl Song

"Muńgwu Katzińa Tawi" "Owl Katzina Song"

Free English translation

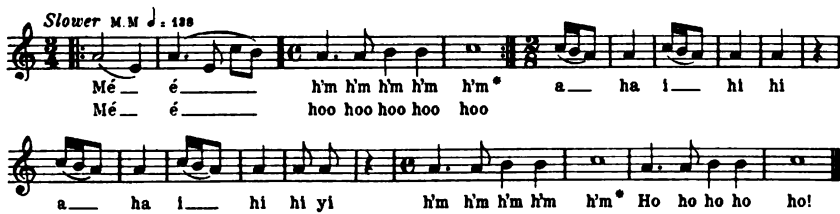
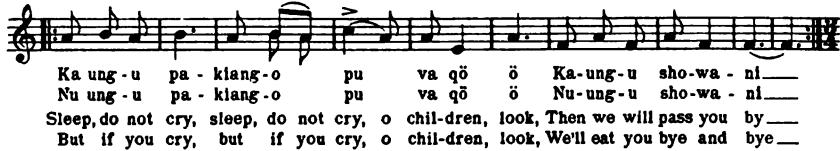
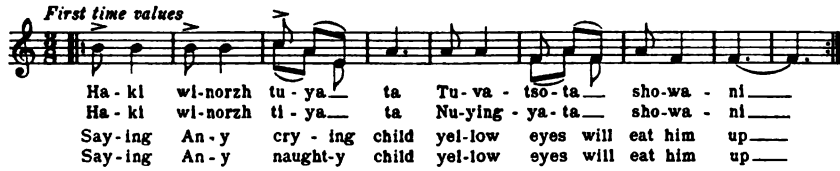
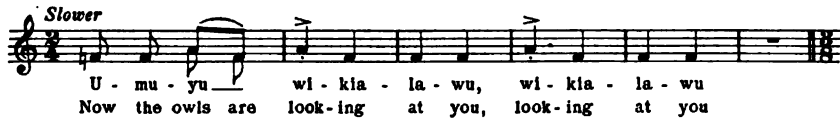
With sharp emphasis  
M. M. ♩. 208

From Northeastern Arizona

Slower M. M. ♩. 128

Mung-wu, Mung-wu, ku-to-zhit a-mum, Na mi po-ci  
Owls, Owls, big owls and lit-tle, Star-ing, giar-ing,

no-no-va-o-ya; Si-kiang-put-a tai kiang o!  
eye-ing each oth-er; Chil-dren, from your boards, oh, see!



\* Sung, with closed lips

The simple philosophy of the natives of our land, whose great teacher is Nature, sees throughout all creation the birth-giving power of two opposite yet mating forces, the male and female principles. Symbolized in nature-poetry these primal elements of existence become to the Indian the Earth-Mother, within whose potent heart lie hushed and unborn all the seeds of life, and the Sun-Father, awakener and fructifier. Man is the child of these cosmic parents behind whom lies the great life-principle itself, too vast and unknowable to be defined, a force impersonal and infinite—the “Great Mystery.” At a Hopi name-giving ceremony which I witnessed, the new-born infant whose tender eyes had been kept within doors for the first days, was at last reverently carried at dawn to the edge of the cliff to behold its father, the Sun, whose first rays welcomed the child into the elemental world of which the new life was now a part. Solemnly the grandmother and aunts waved ears of corn, symbols of fertility and plenty, reciting a short prayer while pronouncing over the child its names. Slowly the sun rose, shining on the upheld infant and on the bronze women outlined on the austere summit of the cliff. Dawn flooded



the desert with swift waves of amethyst and gold. The morning air, pure, unbreathed, untainted, seemed the very breath of a life infinite and sublime. I forgot the devouring discord of the white man's towns. The figures at the edge of the upsweeping crags of rock were as yet the only human forms in a land whose vast horizon tossed against the sky in unbelievable color-splendor. The birth-throes of the coming day throbbed glory and promise and beauty unstained. Into such a world was the Indian baby born. I wonder, does many a white mother offer to her child a birth-gift meaningful as this? And yet the heritage of Nature is ours for the outstretched hand and the voice that asks.

## ON HEARING WHAT YOU WANT WHEN YOU WANT IT

By CARL VAN VECHTEN

**T**HERE are times when life seems to be a very faulty reality. Reflecting to-day, for example, in my garret, I find myself in a melancholy mood following a perusal of the advertising columns of the newspapers. I have looked through the concert-announcements for the day only to discover that I must hear—if I hear anything at all—either Beethoven's Seventh Symphony or Mozart's Symphony in G minor; either the Coriolan Overture or the Overture to Euryanthe; either Chabrier's *Bourrée Fantasque* (which I have never heard) or Sibelius's *Finlandia*; and, at the opera, I am offered *Aida*! Now this is all very discouraging to a man of temperament who would like to order his music as he orders his library or his veal kidneys. One is never obliged to eat at some one else's behest, one reads according to one's fancy, but when one wants to listen to music, one must perforce listen to what is being played or else not listen at all, unless—and here one must admit the futility of the comparison—one is Ludwig of Bavaria. This afternoon I have a whim to attend a concert which shall consist of César Franck's D minor symphony, Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, and Debussy's *La Mer*. Franck's symphony will, of course, be performed some time this winter, but the performance will be sure to fall on a day on which I have no ambition to hear it, and the other pieces will not, in all probability, be performed at all.

My temporary prejudices and tastes in music, indeed, never seem to be in accord with my opportunities. I longed for many years, for example, to hear Vincent d'Indy's *Istar*. The idea of the music disrobing, as the goddess of the legend disrobed, awakened my curiosity which was still further whetted by the rhapsodies which Philip Hale and James Huneker have constructed around the piece. But curiosity dies in time and on the day when, finally, I saw the thing announced, I discovered, to my surprise, that all appetite had left me. Nevertheless, on a bright winter afternoon, when I should have preferred to walk in the

park or to go to a moving-picture theatre, I forced myself into the concert-hall. The hall was over-heated and stuffy; I was surrounded by a crowd of hysterical females who had come to see a Russian violinist, whose name, had it been translated, was Mike or Alec. I sat through a long program, for Istar was last, and when, finally, it was played I began idly to turn over the pages of my book of notes about the music, reading the advertisements with an interest which I found I could not devote to the composition itself. To that, in fact, I scarcely listened. This is not a unique experience; it is usual. The evenings on which I yearn to hear Boris Godunoff they always sing *L'Amore dei Tre Re* at the Opera; the afternoons on which I have a deep longing to listen to Liszt's B minor sonata, the Hofmanns and Bauers and Moiseivitsches all are busy playing Chopin's.

This is very confusing and irritating, for taste in music changes, especially if you hear a good deal of it. I have worshipped at several altars. To some of them I return when I can. The cool, sane, classic beauty of Gluck, the gay, sweet-sour, tragi-comedy of Mozart, the red blare and poster-like dash of American ragtime, the lovely music of Debussy, so like the nocturnes of Whistler, the refreshing melody of Arthur Sullivan, these are seldom unwelcome, but the days on which I enjoy the orchestral orgies of Richard Strauss, the trumpet blasts of Richard Wagner, the fantastic inventions of Hector Berlioz, and the thunderbolts of Beethoven come more rarely. Other intermittent humours find me hankering for the ironic acidity of the quaintly perverse *l'Heure Espagnole*, the bombast of Handel, whom Samuel Butler very nearly succeeded in making famous again, Grieg's piano concerto, Chinese music, the adumbrations of Charles Martin Loeffler, and the thrilling experiments of Leo Ornstein, but seldom do mood and music strike me simultaneously.

There are days on which the charming melancholy and sentimentality of Werther and Eugene Onegin, lyric dramas curiously similar in feeling, would come as a boon. There are nights when "*Les Larmes*" would send me sobbing from the theatre, for this air and the letter song in Tchaikovsky's opera evoke a certain artificial atmosphere of grief more potently than any book or picture with which I am familiar. When Tatjana begins the letter song, if you are in the mood—and how seldom this is!—the key of the play is handed into your keeping, the soul of the composition communes with your own soul, and a vague sympathy with something perhaps alien to your own nature takes possession of you.

Sometimes I am seized with a desire for the dance, a desire for a conventional rhythmic expression, for, at least, even if one cannot dance, one sometimes wants to hear dance music, but these will not be the nights on which the Beautiful Danube, Coppélia, or Beethoven's Seventh Symphony will be played. Der Rosenkavalier would fill the breach, but how often can one hear Der Rosenkavalier?

I have never heard the Barber of Seville without enjoying it, but there are times when I burn to carry Rossinian explorations farther, when I might perhaps take delight in L'Italiana in Algeri, Tancredi, with its still delicious, although unheard, "Di tanti palpiti," sacred to the memory of Giuditta Pasta, William Tell, and La Cenerentola. Often, indeed, sitting before the fire in my garret, I wistfully beg the gods to put it into somebody's head to play me the tunes I have read about so often, but which now I can only hear in my mind's ear through the cold formality of the printed score: Félicien David's *Le Désert*, for example, that "ode-symphonie" which Hector Berlioz hailed as a chef-d'œuvre and which seemingly remained a chef-d'œuvre until the calm ironic Auber one day remarked, "I will wait until David gets off his camel." Either the remark or the subsequent dismounting killed the piece for now it is never played. But I would like to hear it. What could be quainter than Second Empire orientalism? Would Ingres's *Odalisque* come to life under this influence and stand in ivory perfection in some sheik's harem, listening to the call of the muezzin, while the camels tramped the desert with their lumbering, swaying passing? What of Spontini's *La Vestale*? Would this faded score do for Rome what Gluck's music has done for Greece? I can decorate my garret with mid-Victorian trophies, antimacassars, walnut highboys, wall-paper representing Roman temples with Victorian shepherd boys playing pipes near their columns, while troops of ladies, dressed like Mrs. Leo Hunter, take boats and embark for Cythera. I can examine at my leisure mezzotints and engravings by John Martin, Richard Earlom, Valentine Green, Goltzius, Edelinck, or J. R. Smith, and I can enjoy the mellow cornfields and forests of George Inness whenever I feel like it, which is not too often. I can take down from the shelves *The Monk* by M. G. Lewis, *Headlong Hall* by Thomas Love Peacock, *The Art of Dining* by Abraham Hayward, *The Truth about Tristrem Varick* by Edgar Saltus, or read of one of Ouida's wasp-figured guardsmen as often as I please. No strange, old-fashioned byway, no hidden cranny of painting or literature is denied me, but if I were dying of desire to listen to Purcell's *Dido*

and Aeneas, Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, Balfe's *The Maid of Artois*, or even Wagner's *Die Feen* or Puccini's *Edgar*, I should perish before the medicine arrived.

Watteau, Voltaire, Cranach, H. B. Fuller, Rodin, and Joseph Hergesheimer stand ready to please me whenever I am in the proper mood to appreciate their work but, unless I follow Ernest Newman's example—which I am not likely to do—and purchase a player-piano, I am dependent on the Paris Opéra or Mr. Walter Damrosch for the privilege of listening to Lully, Couperin, or Grétry. Even Ernest Newman must listen to most of his music in transcription—transcriptions, which he admits in his laudatory book on the subject, have been made carelessly enough for the most part from transcriptions already fashioned for human players, without reference to the orchestral scores, which the player-piano, being gifted with more than two hands, could more nearly duplicate—and in relation to such music as has not been cut in rolls he would stand in just the same position that I stand. Could he, for instance, buy a roll of *Le Désert*? At this very instant, in reference to my mention of Grétry an inch or two above, I would rather hear a performance of Richard Cœur de Lion, of which an excerpt, quoted in Tschaikovsky's *Pique Dame*, has haunted me ever since I heard that opera, than the complete works of Giuseppe Verdi. Nay! I think I would desert all other pleasures, even an evening at the theatre where Delysia plays, for a performance of the rewritten version of *Simone Boccanegra*. I might want to hear it only once, but how much I do want to hear it that once! At least I want to to-day. In 1926, when Gatti-Casazza at last mounts *Simone Boccanegra* at the Metropolitan Opera House, I shall probably go to bed entirely ignorant of the fact. Curiosity and desire will equally be dead, probably, so far as Cornelius's *The Barber of Bagdad*, Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* are concerned, when the time at last comes when it will be easy for me to satisfy this curiosity and desire.

The case is no better with modern music. It is just as difficult to satisfy one's yearning to hear Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* as it is to hear Offenbach's *Barbe-Bleue*. The Boston Symphony Orchestra probably will perform Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* on the night when I am hungry for the *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, and Bodanzky will provide these last delights on the night when I can be satisfied with nothing but *Daphnis et Chloë*. This is assuredly music in the modern French idiom, although Erik Satie has said, "Ravel has refused the Legion of

Honour, but all his music accepts it," and we know that in ten years this epigram will become a platitude. We have heard a good deal from the modern Italians, Respighi and Malipiero lately, but I wanted to hear them two years ago.

On the whole it is amazing that I or anybody else ever acquires a taste for orchestral music or the opera. We are, it would seem, completely in the power of Messrs. Bodanzky, Gatti-Casazza, Stokovski, Pierre Monteux, the Messrs. Sargent and Milton Aborn, and Fortuno Gallo. They not only decide what we shall hear, they decide when we shall hear it. The situation, of course, is monstrous and unbearable. A few comparisons may bring it to you more forcibly. Suppose, for instance, that the directors of the Metropolitan Art Museum issued a decree to the effect that you could see Manet's *Boy with a Sword* only on July 17, 1922, and not again until February 4, 1930. Suppose that these gentlemen further ordered that Renoir's portrait of Madame Charpentier would be on view only on odd sundays during Lent. Suppose that the Greek vase room or the room containing the Chinese porcelains was only open to the public on December 6, 1922. Let us imagine another example, even more terror-inspiring. Suppose that Messrs. Brentano, Scribner, and Putnam, arbitrarily decided that the public could buy certain books only on certain days. On January 1, for example, Putnam's would sell only the works of Harold Bell Wright, Brentano's only Shaw's new volume of *Plays*, and Scribner's, Joseph Hergesheimer's *San Christóbal de la Habana*. On January 2, one would be permitted to purchase the novels of James Branch Cabell at Putnam's, Benedetto Croce's *Aesthetic* at Brentano's, and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* at Scribner's. On January 3, Putnam's would dole out a new novel by Sinclair Lewis, Brentano's would vend a book by Arthur Machen (if they could find one!), and Scribner's would sell Mencken's *A Book of Prefaces*. On January 4, perhaps I might persuade Putnam's to put out my *The Tiger in the House*; Brentano's would offer Max Beerbohm's *Seven Men*; and Scribner's would display *The Newcomes* by William Makepiece Thackeray. January 5 would be the day to buy *Esther Waters* at Putnam's, William Dean Howell's *Heroines of Fiction*, at Brentano's, and Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* at Scribner's. On January 6, Putnam's would sell Philip Moeller's *Sophie*, Brentano's Donald Evans's *Sonnets from the Patagonian*, and Scribner's, Webster's Dictionary. Of course Dutton's, Malkin's, Drake's, Stammer's, Schulte's, and Goldsmith's, and the officials of the Public Library would also make arbitrary decisions about

the book of the day. This would all seem very strange, no doubt, and probably we would stop buying books, because the particular book we wanted would never be on sale on the day we wanted it, but it would be no stranger than the situation in the concert and opera world.

The places where one must listen to music are also prescribed. One can read a book by the fire, in an apple orchard, or in the Grand Central Station—an excellent place to read some books, by the way—but if I want to hear an orchestra I must go to a concert-hall where the atmosphere is fetid, sit in a hard-backed chair, surrounded by women smelling of opopanax, muguet, and Mary Garden and men who have been smoking Lillian Russell cigars.

And yet, it would appear, there is no remedy. Concerts, after all, must be given within certain hours, and the number of pieces that can be played during these hours—a concert that lasts over 120 minutes is too long—is strictly limited. The Metropolitan Opera House can give only one full-length opera, or not more than three short ones, on one evening. Consequently somebody has to make a choice. The directors naturally choose the works which they think will appeal to the greatest number of people at the time they are played. This accounts for the fact that a symphony which perhaps has not been performed at all for several years will be announced for performance in New York by four conductors during as many weeks.

So we must put up with the inconvenience. We must listen to music when we can, where we can, and with whom we can, and not when, where, and with whom we want to. I wonder if there are others who dream of Debussy's *l'Après-midi d'un Faune* while they are listening to Berlioz's *Fantastic Symphony*, who go to hear Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* when they would prefer to hear Gluck's *Armide*. If some one knows what can be done about it, I hope he will tell me.

# THE MUSIC OF SHADWELL'S "TEMPEST"

By WILLIAM BARCLAY SQUIRE

**T**HE curiously intricate story of the Restoration versions of Shakespeare's "Tempest" has been so fully told by Mr. W. J. Lawrence in 'The Elizabethan Playhouse' (1912), and with less detail in the article on "Purcell's Dramatic Music" contributed by the present writer to the fifth volume of the *Sammelbände* of the International Music Society, that some apology is needed for dealing with the matter again. But the recent discovery by Mlle. Pereyra in the Library of the Paris Conservatoire of a manuscript containing some hitherto unknown music for "The Tempest" by Pelham Humphrey—a discovery which has been described in the Bulletin of the 'Société Française de Musicologie' for last October—renders it advisable to recapitulate the results of earlier research, more especially as the new material of the Paris manuscript enables us to correct, in one point, the conclusions arrived at in the above-mentioned papers and in Mr. E. J. Dent's preface to the "Tempest" music printed by the Purcell Society.

The story of the Restoration versions of "The Tempest" is as follows: In 1667 there was played by the Duke of York's Company at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre a version of Shakespeare's play by D'Avenant and Dryden. This was not published until 1670—two years after D'Avenant's death—with a Preface by Dryden, who says that

Sir William Davenant . . . . designed the Counterpart to Shakespear's Plot, namely that of a Man who had never seen a Woman. . . . This excellent contrivance he was pleas'd to communicate to me, and to desire my assistance in it. I confess that from the very first moment it so pleas'd me, that I never writ anything with more delight.

It is not necessary to detail the egregious alterations made in the original play which were involved by D'Avenant's 'excellent contrivance,' but it must be noted that the 1667 production required the following musical settings:

1. A "*Dialogue sung in parts*" by two devils, in Act II, which begins "Where does proud ambition dwell." It is followed by this stage direction: "Enter the two that sung, in the shape of devils, placing themselves



at the two corners of the stage." They are joined by Pride, Fraud, Rapine and Murder, but these do not sing; "after which they fall into a round encompassing the Duke, etc., singing:

Around, around we pace  
About this cursed place,  
Whilst thus we compass in  
These mortals and their sin."

The scene ends with a dance.

2. "Come unto these yellow sands."
3. "Full fathom five."
4. "The master, the swabber, the gunner and I."
5. "No more dams I'll make for fish."
6. "Dry those eyes."
7. "Where the bee sucks."

There are also dances in the last three acts, notably a Saraband for Ariel and Milcha, a female spirit with whom Ariel is in love, but who does not appear elsewhere in the play.

In 1671 the Duke's Company, then managed by Lady D'Avenant, her son Charles, and Harris and Betterton, two of the principal actors, moved to a new theatre on the east side of Salisbury Court, on the site of the gardens of Dorset House. The theatre, which was larger than the Drury Lane house (then occupied by the King's Company), was designed by Wren. It had approaches both by land and water and seems to have been a very beautiful structure. (There are views of both exterior and interior in the 1673 Quarto of Elkanah Settle's "Empress of Morocco.") With its large stage and improved machinery the Dorset Gardens Theatre from the first became noted for spectacular displays. Thanks to the 'Roscius Anglicanus' of Downes, who was prompter to the Duke of York's Company from 1662 to 1706, we possess a valuable record of the theatrical performances of the reigns of Charles II, James II and William and Mary, and though he is sometimes inaccurate and his dates wrong, yet his mistakes are not so numerous as to invalidate the general correctness of his evidence. From this source we know that there was performed at the Dorset Gardens Theatre

in 1678, the *Tempest*, or the *Inchanted Island*, made into an Opera by Mr. Shadwell, having all New in it; as Scenes, Machines; particularly, one Scene Painted with Myriads of Ariel Spirits; and another flying away, with a Table Furnisht out with Fruits, Sweetmeats, and all sorts of Viands; just when Duke Trinculo and his Companions were going to Dinner; all was things perform'd in it so Admirably well, that not any succeeding Operas got more money.

Mr. Lawrence has shown, on the evidence of a manuscript Prologue and Epilogue written by Shadwell for this production, that the "Opera" of "The Tempest" must have been performed early in 1674, and not in 1673. But as the year at that time ended in March, Downes was not far wrong in his date. The new version performed at Dorset Gardens was published in 1674, and though the text was very materially altered from the Dryden-D'Avenant version, no notice of this appeared on the title-page, and Dryden's Preface with the Prologue and Epilogue of the older version were retained. Curiously enough, when the new version was reprinted in 1690, though the letterpress was set up afresh, the same thing was done, so that, until recently, both the 1673 and 1690 Quartos were taken as being Dryden-D'Avenant versions. But there can be no doubt that they represent Shadwell's operatic arrangement for the Dorset Gardens Theatre, and one of the songs, 'Arise, ye subterranean winds,' occurs with his name as author in a collection of songs issued in 1680 by Pietro Reggio, a Genoese musician who died in London in 1685.

The 1673 Quarto is very interesting from the light it throws on the stage arrangements of the time. At the beginning of Act I

the Front of the Stage is open'd, and the Band of 24 Violins, with the Harpsicals and Theorbo's which accompany the Voices, are plac'd between the Pit and the Stage. While the Overture is playing the Curtain rises, and discovers a new Frontispiece, joyn'd to the great Pilasters, on each side of the Stage. This Frontispiece is a noble Arch, supported by large wreathed Columns of the Corinthian Order; the wreathings of the Columns are beautif'd with Roses wound round them, and several Cupids flying about them. On the Cornice, just over the Capitals, sits on either side a Figure, with a Trumpet in one hand, and a Palm in the other, representing Fame. A little farther on the same Cornice, on each side of a Compass-pediment, lie a Lion and a Unicorn, the Supporters of the Royal Arms of England. In the middle of the Arch are several Angels, holding the Kings Arms, as if they were placing them in the midst of that Compass-pediment. Behind this is the Scene, which represents a thick Cloudy Sky, a very Rocky Coast, and a Tempestuous Sea in perpetual Agitation. This Tempest (suppos'd to be rais'd by Magick) has many dreadful Objects in it, as several Spirits in horrid shapes flying down among the Sailers, then rising and crossing in the Air. And when the Ship is sinking, the whole House is darken'd, and a shower of Fire falls upon 'em. This is accompanied with Lightening, and several Claps of Thunder, to the end of the Storm.

From this description it is clear that room was made for an orchestra by means of a second proscenium, the 'New Frontispiece'; the same arrangement is described in Dryden and Grabu's 'Albion and Albanus' (1685). The "Band of 24 Violins" was evidently

the Royal Band, established early in his reign by Charles II, in imitation of the band of Louis XIV. The singers were also recruited from the Royal establishment, for in the Lord Chamberlain's accounts it is recorded, on 16 May, 1674, that

it is his Majesty's pleasure that Mr. Turner and Mr. Hart, or any other men or boys belonging to his Majesty's Chappell Royal that sing in ye *Tempest* at his Royall Highness Theatre, doe remaine in towne all the week (during his Majesty's absence from Whitehall) to perform that service.

The number of "men and boys" so employed seems to have been thirty, for Shadwell's Epilogue (in Eg. Ms. 2623) says:

We have Machines to some perfection brought,  
And above 30 Warbling voyces gott.

How the whole house was darkened is not clear; possibly it was done by raising chandeliers of candles. It seems doubtful whether foot-lights were used; if so, they must have been drawn off at the sides or screened by shades.

In changing the D'Avenant-Dryden play into an Opera, besides the usual Act and Curtain Tunes, Shadwell naturally introduced a number of instrumental dances and 'flourishes,' and incidental music. He retained the Shakespearean words of 'Come unto these yellow sands,' 'Full fathom five,' 'The master, the swabber, the gunner and I,' 'No more dams I'll make for fish,' and the D'Avenant-Dryden 'Dry those eyes.' The 'Dialogue' sung in Parts, by two devils in Act II was considerably extended. It was first sung under the stage by three devils, who presently rose and were joined by Pride, Fraud, Rapine and Murder—who were all singing characters. At the end of the scene, as Alonzo and his companions are going out, "a Devil rises just before them," who sings a song, 'Arise, ye subterranean winds,' after which "Two Winds rise, ten more enter and dance: at the end of the Dance, three Winds sink, the rest drive" Alonzo, Antonio and Gonzalez off. In Act III, 'Full fathom five' is allotted to Milcha, and the whole work ends with a sort of Masque, in which Neptune, Amphitrite, Oceanus and Tethys appear in a chariot drawn by sea-horses; Æolus descends; winds "from the four corners" appear; there follows "a symphony of Musick, like Trumpets, to which four Trytons dance," and after further singing and dancing, the "scene changes to the Rising Sun, and a number of Aerial Spirits in the Air, Ariel flying from the Sun, advances towards the Pit" and "Ariel and the rest" sing "Where the bee sucks," "Song ended, Ariel speaks, hovering in the Air."

The interesting question arises as to how far it would be possible to reconstruct the musical setting of Shadwell's operatic "Tempest." As to the purely instrumental music, part of it—composed by Matthew Locke—was printed in 1675 in "The English Opera; or the Vocal Musick in *Psyche*. . . . To which is Adjoyned the Instrumental Musick in the *Tempest*." In the preface to this work, Locke states that *the Instrumental Musick before and between the Acts, and the Entries in the Acts of Psyche are omitted by the consent of their Author, Seignior Gio. Baptista Draghi.*<sup>1</sup> *The Tunes of the Entries and Dancers in the Tempest (the Dancers being chang'd) are omitted for the same reason.*

"Psyche" (the words of which are by Shadwell) was produced in 1673, and it is clear that Draghi wrote the dance-music for both that work and for "The Tempest," though what the expression "the dancers being chang'd" means, seems obscure. That Draghi's dances will ever be recovered is unlikely, but the preservation of Locke's music is very valuable. It consists of First and Second Music (played while the audience was assembling), Curtain Tune (or Overture), four Act Tunes and a Conclusion. The First Music comprises an Introduction, Galliard and Gavotte; the Second Music a Saraband and "Lilk" (a term which is defined in no dictionary); the Curtain Tune evidently attempts to depict the storm with which the play opens; the First Act Tune is a Rustic Air; the Second a Minuet; the Third a Corant; the Fourth a Martial Jig, and the Conclusion (probably played as the audience was dispersing) a Canon, 4 in 2. The Curtain Tune and the Lilk were reprinted in 1812 in Vol. I of Stafford Smith's 'Musica Antiqua.'

Somewhere about the same time as the publication of "Psyche," there appeared a small collection headed "The Ariel's Songs in the Play call'd the Tempest," which contains music by John Banister for 'Come unto these yellow sands,' 'Dry those eyes,' 'Go thy way' and 'Full fathom five'; by Pelham Humphrey for 'Where the bee sucks,' and by James Hart for 'Adieu to the pleasures'—a song which does not occur in any of the Quartos. This publication offers a very puzzling bibliographical problem. Rimbault (in Grove's Dictionary) says that Banister, jointly with Pelham Humphrey, wrote the music to 'The Tempest,' performed in 1667, some of the songs in which were published in the first book of "Choice Ayres" in 1676, while the Dictionary of National Biography makes matters worse by saying that Banister and Humphrey wrote music for "The Tempest" in 1676—two years after

<sup>1</sup>By an extraordinary mistake Grove's Dictionary (I. 727) states that Draghi published in 1675 the Act-tunes and some other instrumental music for 'Psyche'!

the date of Humphrey's death. According to Husk (Grove's Dictionary, II, p. 442) the "rare, separately paged sheet" containing the 'Ariel's Songs' is to be found inserted in some copies of the 1676 edition of "Choice Ayres." The British Museum contains copies of both the 1675 and 1676 editions of the book, but neither contains any 'Tempest' music, though the latter does print Hart's song, but without any indication that it belongs to "The Tempest." The Museum also possesses a copy of 'The Ariel's Songs,' without date, pagination or imprint; and in a very fragmentary copy of some edition of "Choice Ayres" which is preserved in the Royal College of Music, there is another copy, in which the 'Ariel's Songs' are paged 77-80, with the register signature Vv, but followed by a second page 77. This imperfect copy wants the title-page, but from p. 69 on differs entirely from the 1676 edition, which is considerably longer. It is very difficult to say from this evidence which is the earliest edition of the 'Ariel's Songs.' The discovery of a perfect copy agreeing with the Royal College book would settle the question, but provisionally it may be surmised that it represents a second edition of the 1675 book, and that, previous to its issue, the 'Ariel's Songs' were printed without pagination and then included (with pagination) in the book after it was ready for publication. Why they were omitted from the 1676 edition seems inexplicable. Anyway, it is pretty certain that the printed 'Ariel's Songs' do not date from before 1675, and the general assumption that they represent the musical settings used in the D'Avenant-Dryden version of 1667 falls to the ground, while on the other hand, it is practically certain that they form part of the Shadwell production.

In this respect the presence of Hart's song is important. The title 'Dorinda lamenting the loss of her Amintas' (there is no Amintas in either version) points to its having been introduced—probably in the fourth or fifth Act, where Dorinda thinks that Hippolyto has been killed by Ferdinand—and that it forms no part of D'Avenant's, Dryden's, or Shadwell's alterations.

James Hart was born at York in 1647 and was a bass-singer in the Minster there until 1670, when he was appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. It has already been shown in the extract from the Lord Chamberlain's accounts, that he was one of the singers in the 1674 Shadwell production, and it is safe to conclude that his song was introduced either then or at some subsequent revival. Anyway it could not have been written for the 1667 D'Avenant-Dryden version, when he was still living at York. Moreover, Pelham Humphrey only returned from

studying abroad in October, 1667, and it is not very probable that he would at once have been employed to set 'Where the bee sucks' for the D'Avenant-Dryden version, which Pepys seems to have seen performed on the 7th November, 1667. In 1674 Humphrey was Master of the Children, Banister Leader of the King's Band, Locke Composer in Ordinary to the King and Draghi probably organist to Catherine of Braganza, so that the musical setting of Shadwell's 'Tempest' was entrusted to the most prominent musicians of the day. If the view that the 'Ariel's Songs' really belong to 1674 and not to 1667 is correct, they furnish an important addition to the instrumental music of Locke. Caliban's songs, and 'The master, the swabber, the gunner and I,' were probably not set to music, but sung by the actors to any impromptu strain. The missing vocal music has now been supplied by Mlle. Pereyra's fortunate discovery in the library of the Paris Conservatoire.

It consists of fourteen pages of manuscript, written on a stave of six lines, and was acquired at the Libri Sale in 1858. To judge by the careful copy which Mlle. Pereyra has kindly had made, the manuscript contains a good many errors, though not such as may not be easily corrected. It is headed "The Vocal Musick in the Tempest by Mr. Pelh. Humfrey," and contains (in the following order) 'The song of the Three Divells,' The Masque, and the song 'Arise, ye subterranean winds'; thus supplying the lacunæ in Locke's publication and in the 'Ariel's Songs,' so that (with the exception of Draghi's dance-tunes) the whole of the musical setting of Shadwell's "Tempest" can now be reconstructed. The position of 'Arise, ye subterranean winds' in the Conservatoire manuscript is noticeable, for in the play the song occurs in Act II and not after the Masque. It is also the only part of the music which has a figured bass. The explanation of this is that the setting is not by Humphrey, but by Pietro Reggio; it will be found in the rare "Songs set by Signior Pietro Reggio" published at London in 1680 and its presence in the manuscript thus confirms the surmise that it was written for the 1674 performance. It is much to be wished that a work of so much historical interest as the music to Shadwell's 'Tempest' could be published. Humphrey's share in it is especially interesting, as he is generally credited with having introduced into England the style of declamatory recitative which originated in Italy and was developed in France by Lully, with whom Humphrey is said to have studied. Though it was supplanted for stage purposes by Purcell's music, the "Tempest" of Locke, Humphrey and Banister has an important place among the incunabula of opera in England.

It is in cases like these that the need of an English publication on the lines of the German "Denkmäler" is so much felt. Locke's "Psyche," the Shadwell "Tempest" music, Eccles' "Macbeth" and "Semele," the operas of Daniel Purcell and Godfrey Finger, the "Macbeth" music before it was tinkered by Boyce—these ought all to be available to students of the history of English music. But a country which owns Purcell and yet has not succeeded in completing the edition of his works begun forty-five years ago cannot be expected to take any interest in the music of its minor composers.

Scene from the  
Masque "The Tempest"

Words by Thos. Shadwell

Pelham Humphrey

Amphitrite

My Lord, great Nep-tune, for my sake, Of

this bright beau - - ty pit - y take, And to the rest al -

low your mer - cy too. Let this en-rag-ed el - e-ment be still,



Let Æ-o-lus o-bey my will, Let him his bois-trous pris-hers safe-ly

keep In the dark cav-erns and no more Let them dis-turb the sur-ges of the

deep, Till these ar - rive up-on their wish'd for shore.

Neptune

I so a - dore my Am - phi - tri - te's eyes

That no com-mand of hers I can — de - spise.

Te-thys no fur-rows now shall wear, O - ce - a - nus no

wrin - kles on his brow, Let your se - ren - est looks ap -

pear, Be calm, be calm and *Piano* gen - tle now.

**Amphitrite**

Be calm, ye great pa-rents of the floods and the springs, While each  
Neptune

Be calm, ye great pa-rents of the floods and the springs, While each

Ne-reid and Tri-ton plays, rev-els, and sings. Be

Ne-reid and Tri-ton plays, rev-els, and sings. Be

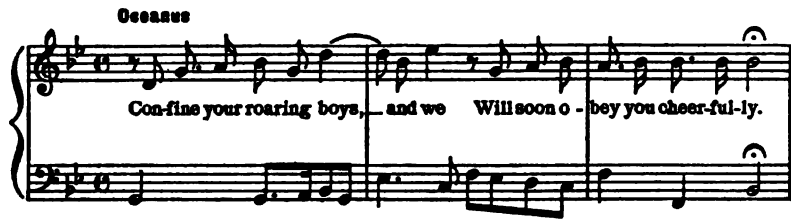
calm, ye great pa-rents of the floods and the springs, While each

calm, ye great pa-rents of the floods and the springs, While each

Ne-reid and Tri-ton plays, rev-els, and sings.

Ne-reid and Tri-ton plays, rev-els, and sings.

**Oceanus**



Con-fine your roaring boys, and we Will soon o - bey you cheer-ful-ly.

**Chorus of Tritons and Nereids**

**SOPRANO**

Tie up the winds and we'll o - bey, Up - on the floods we'll

**ALTO**

Tie up the winds and we'll o - bey, Up - on the floods we'll

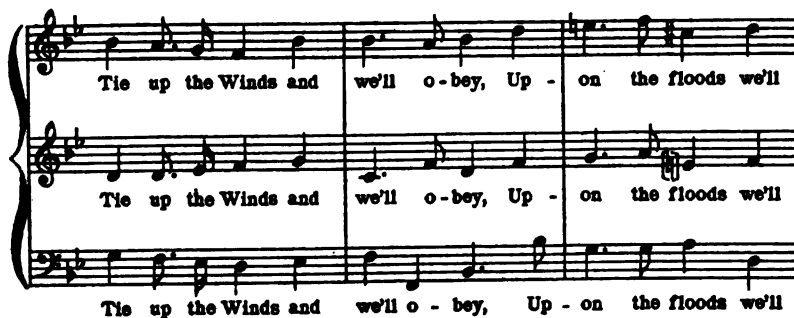
**BASS**

Tie up the winds and we'll o - bey, Up - on the floods we'll

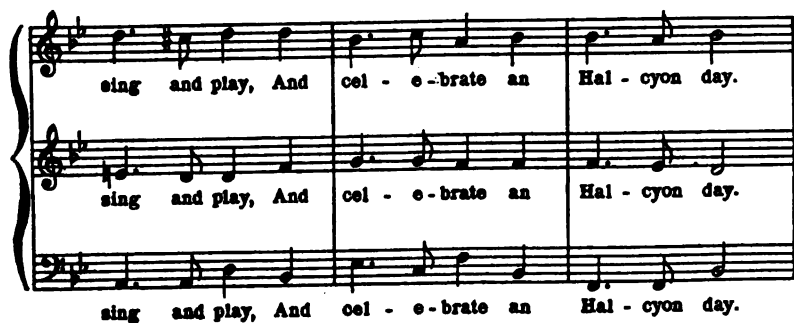
sing and play, And cel - e-brate an Hal - cyon day.

sing and play, And cel - e-brate an Hal - cyon day.

sing and play, And cel - e-brate an Hal - cyon day.



Musical score for piano and voice, first system. The piano part is in the left hand, and the voice part is in the right hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: Tie up the Winds and we'll o-bey, Up - on the floods we'll



Musical score for piano and voice, second system. The piano part is in the left hand, and the voice part is in the right hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: sing and play, And cel - e-brate an Hal - cyon day.

# NAPOLEON, MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

By J.-G. PROD'HOMME

**A** CENTURY has gone by since Napoleon died at Saint Helena. On May 5, 1821, the man who had made the world tremble, who had cast down and set up thrones, who had essayed to found a dynasty and, in out-and-out modern times, achieved an epic which bears comparison with the most prodigious ones whose memory is preserved in general history, disappeared from earth.

When we speak Napoleon's name, we evoke one of the most extraordinary as well as the most widely discussed geniuses known to humanity at large, one of those who give the world an impulsion whose repercussions make themselves felt across the centuries. The hero whom Beethoven wished to honor was not only a warrior genius, he was also a legislator whose universal spirit of organization embraced every manifestation of human activity, whether scientific, literary or artistic, military or political. To discuss Napoleon the art-lover, Napoleon the musician, is to endeavor to uncover one of the facets, and by no means the least interesting, of his multiple personality: it allows us to fathom his sensibility, always wide-awake and on the alert, and also to show in him the philosopher presenting in a few lines, a few true and conclusive words, his sociological ideas with regard to Art.

And when we consider Napoleon in his relations to music and musicians, we recall, in addition, an art-epoch which at a distance is revealed to us with certain sharply-defined characteristics, as apparent in the music as in the other developments of the human mind and intelligence during the fifteen years of the Consulate and the Empire. Finally, it recalls a source of inspiration to which musicians—though in a far less degree than other artists or writers—have had recourse on occasion.

Thanks to the documents, private and official, the papers and journals, the memoirs covering the Napoleonic era which we possess in such numbers, we are able to present this survey of Napoleon in his relations to music in the pages which follow.

\* \* \*

When young Napoleon Bonaparte went to France, to prepare himself for a military career in the school at Brienne, and first of

all at the *Collège d'Autun* (where he learned French in three months), he was ten years old. It is possible that he brought with him some musical recollections of his island, some folk-tunes, *nanne* (cradle songs), serenades, ballads, *noëls*, *lamenti*, *voceri* or *paghielle*, heard in town or in the country. Corsican folk-lore, recently studied by M. Austin de Croze (*Chants populaires de la Corse*, 1912) without being exuberantly luxuriant, at that time still had preserved a large number of traditional airs, which have not yet vanished in our own day. And to this anonymous music there should no doubt be added some songs or ariettes brought from the Continent, Italy in particular, by travellers.

After having spent three months at Autun (January 1 to May 12, 1779), he remained for five and a half years at Brienne (up to October of 1784). In this monarchical academy, where young gentlemen were educated for the king's service, they were not only instructed in the sciences and humanities, but were also given some idea of the arts which might enable them, later on, to play a part in society; in addition to fencing, an art with which no soldier and no gentleman could dispense, and drawing, the students at Brienne were given dancing—and music lessons. The names of the professors who taught these branches are known: they were musically speaking, artists quite obscure, Frédéric, Morizet and Gugenberg, the first and last probably of German or Alsatian origin. They taught both vocal and instrumental music, and the officers of the future, in their annual public exercises, gave examples of their musical aptitudes. Thus, in 1782, fifteen students performed an "*entrée* for grand orchestra," two others played a duo, and still others a quartet, and the "*Mannheim Menuet*." Yet the year following, the course in music was suppressed, and its place taken by another course in living languages, regarded as a more useful study.

There is no record of the young Napoleon—"not very strong as regards the amenities and Latin," to quote one of his reports—having taken part in the public musical exercises already mentioned. We know, however, that under the direction of an "academician" by name of Javilliers (there was a dancer of this name at the Paris *Opéra* from 1701 to 1743) Napoleon was one of the thirty-seven students who "took lessons in walking and bowing," as well as one of the seventeen who "executed the steps of the quadrille together, and with their evolutions in group made a pretty sight for the pleasure of the onlookers," at the exercises of 1781<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>A. Chuquet, *La Jeunesse de Napoleon*, Tome I.

Later on, at Malmaison and the Tuileries, the First Consul and Emperor showed that he had not forgotten the principles he had acquired at Brienne. Above all, he enjoyed dancing to the old airs which recalled to him his youth, such as *La Monaco*, which he always called for "as being the easiest, and the air to which he danced least badly." (Thibeudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat*.)

"What do you think of my dancing?" the Emperor one day asked Countess Potocka. "Sire," she replied, "for a great man you dance perfectly!"

As regards music, he could remember only comic-opera ariettas or chansonettes, which he sang with a voice as much out of tune as that of Louis XV.

Usually it was in the morning (says his valet Constant), that these little reminiscences cropped up. He would regale me with them while he was being dressed. The air which I most frequently heard him exco-riate was the *Marseillaise*. At times, too, the Emperor would whistle, but not loudly. The tune of *Marlborough*, when the Emperor whistled, represented for me his positive announcement of a speedy departure for the army. I remember that he never whistled so much, and that he was never more gay than when the moment came for him to leave for the Russian campaign.

And during the campaign itself he hummed the same air after the passage of the Niemen, at Thorn, in the June of 1812.

The officers on duty who were resting about his apartment, were stupefied at hearing him sing at the top of his voice an air appropriate to the circumstances, one of those revolutionary refrains which had so often carried the French along the road to victory, the first stanza of the *Chant du départ*.<sup>1</sup>

Six months later, on November 14, between Smolensk and Krasnoie, the faithful Constant once more draws a picture of the Emperor, surrounded by the Old Guard, passing across the firing-line of the battle:

The band played the air: *Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?* (Where could one be better off than in the bosom of his family?). Napoleon stopped it, crying: 'Play rather: *Veillons au salut de l'empire!*' (Watch over the safety of the Empire). It would be hard to imagine anything more inspiring.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Albert Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre*.

<sup>2</sup>These two national airs were taken from the comic operas: the first is the famous quartet from Grétry's *Lucile*; the second, an air from Dalayrac's *Renaud d'As*, was provided with new words at the time of the Revolution.



The Baron de Meneval, one of his secretaries, tells us:

When he grew weary of reading poetry, he would begin to sing loudly, but out of tune. When nothing vexed him, or when he was satisfied with the subject-matter of his meditations, the fact was reflected in his choice of songs. One of his favorite melodies had for its subject a young girl whose lover cures her of the bite of some winged insect. It was a kind of Anacreontic ode with but a single stanza. It ended with the line:

*Un baiser de sa bouche en fut le médecin.*

(A kiss from her lips was the cure he used.)

When he was in a more serious frame of mind, he would sing verses of hymns or of the revolutionary cantatas, such as the *Chant du départ*, *Veillons au salut de l'empire*, or he would warble the two lines:

*Qui veut asservir l'univers*

*Doit commencer par sa patrie.*

(He who would the world subdue

With his own country should begin.)

He would at times pass over to a less serious strain, as, for example, when having finished his work, he went to the apartments of the Empress:

*Ah! c'en est fait, je me marie.*

(Ah! now 'tis done and I will wed.)

or else:

*Non, non s'il est impossible*

*D'avoir un plus aimable enfant.*

(No, no, 'tis quite impossible

A kinder sweetheart to possess.)

From the standpoint of another of his contemporaries, Arnault (*Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*),

in his case the song was nothing else than the expression of his ill humor. During his moments of annoyance, walking about with his hands behind his back, he would hum, as much as possible off the key, *Ah! c'en fait, je me marie*. Everyone knew what this signified. 'If you have some favor to ask of the general, do not ask it at this moment: he is singing,' Junot said to me.

According to this same Arnault, who followed him to Egypt, Bonaparte, like all soldiers, preferred "a popular song, arranged for the oboe, the flute, the trumpet and the clarinet, to the compositions of one of the greatest geniuses who ever existed" (Méhul). At the time he considered Della Maria, a Frenchman naturalized in Italy, whose graceful and spontaneous gifts had been revealed the preceding winter in *le Prisonnier*,<sup>1</sup> as the greatest of all composers.

<sup>1</sup>A comic opera presented at the Feydeau Theatre, January 29, 1798.

We shall see, in the following pages, how his preferences, although they underwent some modification in the course of years, remained faithful to Italian music.

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After visits to Corsica, and after having taken Toulon, Napoleon, placed on the retired list, comes to Paris the possessor of a certain already established reputation. He frequents the theatres no less than political circles, and it is at this time, with the prodigious facility for assimilation which characterizes him, that he is able to educate himself musically at the *Opéra*, the *Opéra-Comique* and the *Feydeau*, up to the moment when he is appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy (1796). And while preparing his plans of campaign, he does not forget to occupy himself with civilian affairs, with letters, science and the arts. Thus it is that, in 1797, together with Salicetti, the executive commissary of the Directory with the armies, he issues a decree "to make certain, by reliable means, of such monuments of science and art as may be found in the cities conquered by the armies, and have them sent to France." Nor was music forgotten, as is so often the case in similar circumstances; and while Jean-Pierre Tinet, an artist of the Tuscan Legation, is attached to the army in the character of an agent "charged to gather up in the conquered territories the paintings, master-pieces and other monuments of antiquity which are adjudged worthy of being sent to Paris," Rodolphe Kreutzer, then professor of violin at the *Conservatoire*, accompanies the army or is sent to join it, and is similarly active, musically, from the year V to the year VIII (1800). For nearly two years Kreutzer remains in Italy, having copies made of numerous manuscripts, and sending off these "trophy of the valor of the French arms" (as a memorial he addressed to the ministry in 1808 puts it) to the library of the Paris *Conservatoire*. Then, when peace was signed at Campo-Formio, he undertook a concert-tour through central Europe. He was in Vienna with Bernadotte, at the beginning of the year 1798, and there made the acquaintance of Beethoven, to whom he is said to have suggested the idea of the *Eroica* Symphony. Beethoven, on the other hand, a long time after, dedicated the famous Sonata for violin and piano to him.

Alluding to this mission of Kreutzer's, the poet Arndt, in his book of travels (*Reise*, Vol. I, p. 340), wrote at the time in question:

The celebrated Kreutzer of Paris came here recently (to Vienna), saying that the French had collected and carried away all the ancient music by the masters long since dead, and which could only be heard and studied in Italy. Hence, as regards music, for the moment there is no one able to draw off young Europe's boots.

In a letter by Bonaparte, actually written from grand general headquarters in Milan, the 8th Thermidor of the Year V (July 26, 1797), to the inspectors of the *Conservatoire* at Paris, we find a few interesting lines relating to music:

Among all the fine arts (writes the young commander-in-chief), music is the one which exercises the greatest influence upon the passions, and is the one which the legislator should most encourage. A musical composition created by a master-hand makes an unfailing appeal to the feelings, and exerts a far greater influence than a good work on morals, which convinces our reason without affecting our habits.

Here we already find Bonaparte thinking as a legislator, and as a general who has observed the effect of music on his men, rather than as an amateur. His reading or his reflections had inspired this very accurate thought regarding music. In a similar manner he considers music from the standpoint of social utility when, three months later, he writes to the minister of the interior the 26th Vendemiare of the Year VI (October 17, 1797):

I beg you, citizen minister, to inform the musicians of the Cisalpine Republic (that is to say, of Northern Italy), that I offer for competition, to whoever writes the best piece having for its subject the death of General Hoche, a prize and a medal to the value of one hundred sequins. You will be kind enough to appoint three artists who will act as judges to allocate this prize.

Bonaparte.

Poets and composers at once set to work, and while in Paris, on the tenth Vendemiare (October 1), they sang an ingenious lament inspired by the death of the young general of the Republic, Cherubini's *Hymne funèbre*—one of the finest compositions of the revolutionary period, set to words by M.-J. Chénier and completed in eight days—Paisiello, then *maitre-de-chapelle* of the King of the two Sicilies, was working on a *Musica funebre all' occasione della morte del fu Generale Hoche, cercatagli dal Sigre. General in Capite Buonaparte*. . . . Naples, November 11, 1797.

It was thus that Bonaparte endeavored to rally to the cause of the French Republic the scholars and artists of the conquered lands. And this fact may have been partly responsible for the great and almost exclusive admiration the First Consul showed for Paisiello. Napoleon himself carried the latter's score to Paris

and deposited it in the *Conservatoire*: it is inscribed, in his own hand-writing "Given to the Conservatory of Music by the Citizen Bonaparte."

Not long after, the *Conservatoire*, wishing to please its future master—"Napoleon was already showing through the Bonaparte," as Victor Hugo said—had this hymn performed in his presence. But at the same time it was unluckily inspired to give a performance of Cherubini's work as well. When the ceremony had terminated, Bonaparte, addressing himself to Cherubini in a dissatisfied manner, told him that Paisiello was the greatest of contemporary of composers, and that Zingarelli came next. Divining the tastes of the great man at a word, Méhul, Gossec, Grétry and Lesueur, who were present, bowed deferentially; but Cherubini whose spine was less flexible, showed less patience and presence of mind and murmured: "Paisiello might pass at a pinch, but Zingarelli. . . ." We shall see later on how he soon managed to earn the disfavor of the master of France.

His stay in Milan, where music played an important part, finally and completely turned Napoleon's taste in the direction of Italian musical art, which he had recently enjoyed in Paris, side by side with operas in Gluck's style, dramas by Lesueur and Cherubini, and French comic-operas. Nevertheless, his ideas changed more or less with the years and with circumstances, notably after his marriage to Marie-Louise, an Austrian princess, whose musical education had been quite different from that of Josephine, the former Madame de Beauharnais.

Returning to Paris on December 5, 1797, Bonaparte remained there for exactly six months, until his departure for Egypt (May 4, 1798). He brought back the Treaty of Campo-Formio, and solemnly turned it over to the Directory, in session at the Luxembourg Palace, on December 10. This solemnity gave the authors of the *Chant du Départ*, M. J. Chénier and Méhul, an opportunity of presenting their *Chant du Retour*, which was performed at the *Conservatoire* in honor of the Army of Italy, and to celebrate a peace which none thought as ephemeral as it turned out to be.

In his preparations for the Egyptian campaign, as in those for the campaign of Italy, Bonaparte developed tremendous activity. Not only did he occupy himself with military plans, but his spirit of organization extended to the sciences, to literature, and the arts, no less than to questions of civil administration. He appointed a large commission, which was given the name of the "Egyptian Institute," and included representatives of every branch of human knowledge. The result of their labors has been

embodied in a monumental publication known under the name of the "Description of Egypt," whose twenty volumes in folio were published at intervals from 1809 to 1826. Instead of Méhul or the singer Lays, whom Napoleon had first had in mind, it was Guillaume-André Villoteau, musician and singer, who, in the "Egyptian Institute" became the representative of music. Villoteau has left four memorials on ancient and modern Egyptian music, and on the music of the Orientals, which have been inserted in the "Description."

We might here cite the following order of the day, given by the general-in-chief at his headquarters in Cairo on the 1st Nivose of the Year VII (December 21, 1797):

Every day at noon, in the squares adjoining the hospitals, the bands of the different corps will play various tunes calculated to make the sick feel cheerful, and to recall to them the glorious moments of their past campaign.

Bonaparte.

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With the Consulate, the musical *fêtes* of the Revolution, whose hymns had been liturgic in character, little by little became exclusively military festivals. However, on July 14, 1800, the *Chant du 25 Messidor*, at a "sing" of quite grandiose proportions, was given at the *Invalides* (Temple of Mars), and Méhul assembled for its performance three choruses and three orchestras. Later, the *fête* of the 1st Vendemiaire (September 22), celebrated with a hymn by Lesueur, also sung at the *Invalides*, and employing four orchestras, concludes the era of the Revolutionary *fêtes*.

From that time forward the only music given the people will be that of the regiments making victorious reentry into the capital, or defiling on parade at the Tuileries, where the First Consul established himself after the grand stroke of Brumaire (November, 1799).

The routine of daily life, after an interruption of ten years, is gradually resumed in the ancient habitation of the kings of France, whose protocole Bonaparte essays to revive. The First Consul shows himself quite frequently at the *Opéra*, situated in the *rue de Richelieu* (now *rue de la Loi*), and which at the time is still known as the *Théâtre des Arts*. His visits are marked by two historical events, two attempts at assassination which are associated with the two most recent novelties then presented on the great lyric stage. On the 10th Vendemiaire (October 18), the first performance of an opera which had had but little success, *les*

*Horaces*, by Porta, was to be given when, the evening before, the police were notified that a conspiracy had been formed against Bonaparte. During the course of the performance it had been planned to seize the person of the First Consul and, perhaps, kill him, improving the opportunity offered by the panic the conspirators intended to create in the hall. One of the latter, however, overcome by remorse, it is said, told all that he knew to the police, who made their arrangements and arrested all the conspirators while the performance was in progress, without the public being aware of it. The matter was not disclosed until some days afterward, by the newspapers, which, be it said, showed great discretion. One of the heads of this conspiracy was the Corsican Arénat; another was the sculptor Cerechi, who had formerly modeled the bust of Bonaparte in Milan, and had gone to Paris in the hope of disposing of it for 18,000 francs. The opera *les Horaces* is rescued from obscurity only by reason of this political occurrence connected with it. Bonaparte, incidentally, was soon to return to the *Opéra*, holding his own against the opposition, notably on October 27 and November 4, at the same time as the ministers of Austria and Prussia.

The 3d Nivose (December 24) following, to quote Thibeudeau,

the First Consul set out for the *Opéra* at eight o'clock in the evening, with a picket of guards, having with him in his coach Generals Berthier, Lannes and his aid-de-camp Lauriston. When they had reached the *rue Saint-Nicaise* they found a wretched cart, to which a small horse was harnessed, placed in such a manner as to block the thoroughfare. The coachman was skillful enough to avoid it in passing, though he was driving very speedily. A few moments later a terrible explosion shattered the panes of the coach, wounded the last man of the escort, killed eight persons, and more or less seriously injured twenty-eight others, as well as inflicting damages estimated at 200,000 francs to forty-six buildings in the vicinity. The First Consul continued on his way, and arrived at the *Opéra*. There they were singing Haydn's "Creation."

The performance of an oratorio, by two hundred and fifty musicians and singers, on Christmas Eve at the *Opéra*, was a sign of the times. The following year, the first of the new century, had not as yet come to an end before peace with the church was an accomplished fact: the Concordance with the Pope being signed on September 17. The cathedral of Notre-Dame, restored to the Faith, celebrated the great event at Easter 1802, with a *Te Deum* by Paisiello, whose favor was thus officially confirmed. And somewhat later, at the Camp at Boulogne, the *Chant du Départ* was sung for the last time by more than twelve-hundred

persons. The two occurrences point out the direction taken by the new revolution, the successor to the first.

Or, rather than a new revolution, the old social order, little by little, was once more raising its head, and a new social order came into being which prudently borrowed some of the institutions of the *ancien régime*. Here, too, music played a part in the life and political activities of the First Consul. Under the title of "the band of the Consuls," Bonaparte had already established a military band by Blasius. But now he wished to have a band of his own, a "band of the First Consul," just as formerly there had been the body known as "the king's music." The Baron de Trémont, in an unpublished notice on Rode says:

This musical beginning was not known as an 'orchestra,' and was made up of only a few of the best instrumental players of Paris. Malmaison was the only summer residence which Napoleon and his family had. And any knowledge of music deserving of honor was so foreign to the indwellers of Malmaison that the first time the artists were assembled in the chateau, the Consul having been compelled to absent himself, no one knew what to do with the musicians. Then Napoleon's sisters and sisters-in-law, younger and gayer than when they became queens, thought that it would be a good opportunity to have some dancing and, without any idea of giving offence, they asked the artists whether they could not play some square dances for them. The latter replied that they were totally incapable of so doing, and the foolish request was not repeated.

The musical evenings, the little family concerts at Malmaison, little by little, brought about the reëstablishment of the music choir. Eight singers and a body of twenty-seven symphonic players under the direction of Paisiello formed a corps of musicians large enough for the place in which they did their duty. The chapel having been destroyed, divine service was performed in the hall of the Council of State, where there was room for no more than the singers and a piano. Arranged in two rows behind the singers, the violins played in a little gallery facing the altar, while the basses and wind instruments were relegated to an adjoining room. The musicians had a good deal of difficulty in manœuvring on a field so disadvantageous for concerted work. On each preceding evening the room had to be stripped of its furniture, chairs, tables and desks, in order to make an oratory of it for Sunday use, and all the furniture had to be returned again on Monday, so that the Council of State might meet there. Napoleon, when he became Emperor, had a new chapel added to the Tuileries, on the foundation of the Hall of the Convention, in which, during the Revolution, the *Concerts spirituels* had taken







**Angelina Catalani**

place. It was inaugurated on February 2, 1806, with a solemn high mass.

Under the supreme direction of Paisiello, with Lesueur as second conductor, the imperial chapel-orchestra was made up of a master of music, two accompanying pianist-organists, thirty-four singers and choristers, and fifty instrumentalists (1810); numbering 99 persons in all, in 1815. Its budget, from 90,000 francs in the Year VIII (1801), had mounted to nearly 154,000 by 1812. (See G. Servières's *Episodes d'histoire musicale*.)

It was not until 1806, after having heard the music of the Court of Saxony, at Dresden, that the Emperor began to think that he, too, would like to have a musical establishment of a kind not exclusively religious. He engaged Paër "to conduct the music of the concerts and theatrical representations at Court, and to compose all the musical compositions he would be ordered to furnish by command of His Imperial Majesty," with a stipend of 28,000 francs per annum, and three months' leave of absence every year. The contract was signed at Warsaw on January 14, 1807. This, "special music of the Emperor" at first included a pianist-accompanist, Rigel, a secretary, Grégoire, five women singers (Mmes. Grassini, Paër, d'Ellieu, Albert-Hymm, Giacomelli) and two male singers (Crescentini and Brizzi). Later on, however, it included Mmes. Barilli, Festa, Sessi, Camporesi; the tenors Crivelli, Tachinardi, and Nozzari; the bass Barilli, the 'cellist Duport, etc. The orchestra was that of the imperial chapel.

All artists of distinction who arrived in Paris were invited to sing or play at the Emperor's concerts, on the express condition that they would accept, in silver, some honorable recompense, proportionate to their merit. The virtuosos, the women in particular, invariably refused their honorariums in the hope that some jewel would accrue to them in their stead, even though its value might be less than the sum offered. A present from Napoleon represented the object of their desire, the goal of their ambition. Mme. Catalani herself was not accorded this favor, yet she was renumerated in princely fashion. Five thousand francs down, a pension of 1200 francs, and the loan of the hall of the *Opéra*, all expenses paid, for two concerts, whose receipts came to 49,000 francs, such was the price the Emperor offered the *diva* in question for having sung at Saint-Cloud on May 4 and 11, 1805. (Castil-Blaze.)

The Emperor at the time, so the singer Blangini tells us in his *Souvenirs* "was undergoing an attack of urgent musical need, I might almost say, was in a state of musical frenzy." Every evening, at Fontainebleau, after the theatrical representation, "His Majesty would repair to the Empress's *salon*, where he (Napoleon) would listen to more music up to one o'clock in the

morning." According to the same writer, the compositions of Paisiello, Zingarelli, Haydn, Martini and Lesueur made up almost the whole of the repertory of the imperial orchestra.

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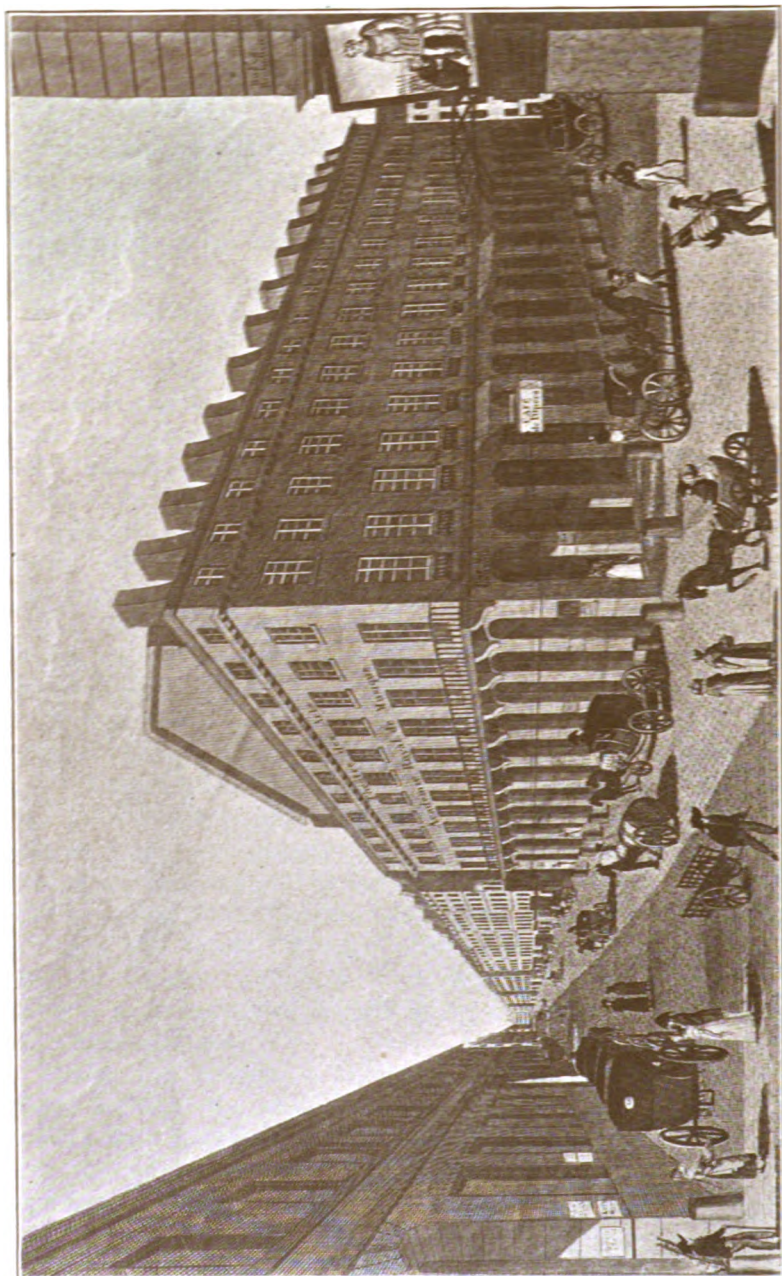
The theatres, which had enjoyed the utmost freedom from control under the Revolution, according to the decree of 1791, were none the more prosperous because of the fact, the *Opéra* in particular whose budget, under the old *régime* had always shown, a deficit<sup>1</sup>. The emigration of the nobles had caused it to lose its wealthy patrons, and the works inspired by the Revolutionary government were not calculated to fill its coffers. The Consulat introduced a little order into the affairs of the *Théâtre des Arts*, and a decree of the 6th Frimaire of the Year VI provided it with a director and a responsible administrator. Besides, the First Consul decided that all the boxes were to be paid for by those who occupied them. The same course was adopted as regards the *Opéra-Comique*, which was raised to the rank of an official theatre; and in 1799 we see "Citizen Bonaparte", with one stroke of the pen settle arrears of payment amounting to 1,299 livres, for the rent of boxes at the theatre in question. The grand political stroke of Brumaire had born fruits, and Bonaparte's sense of order had begun to show itself here as it did everywhere.

Dating from the same time was the interdiction by the prefect of police, of works dealing with the *coup d'Etat*, and on the 22d Germinal of the Year VIII (April 12, 1800), the minister of the interior arrogated to himself the right to authorize all such works as might be represented. This amounted to the reëstablishment of the preventive censure. At the *Opéra* "without the public's paying any attention to the fact, or showing any interest, the use of the words "throne," "king" and "queen" were introduced in Gluck's "Alceste." A consular decree allowed the theatre a subvention of 50,000 livres per month, and did away with free admissions.

Under the Empire a series of decrees revived the pension system, forbade the establishment of new theatres, determined the kind and variety of those already in existence, and gave the *Opéra* the exclusive right to perform "those works which are altogether musical, and ballets in the noble and gracious style;

<sup>1</sup>See my study "Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Opera" (1669-1919), in the "Musical Quarterly" of October, 1919.





View of the Théâtre de l'Opéra  
(about 1818)

such as those whose subjects are derived from mythology and history, and whose principal characters are gods, kings and heroes." Finally, there appeared the decree of July 29, 1807, reducing the number of theatres in Paris to eight. Twenty or more others had to close their doors before August 15, the date of the Emperor's *fête*, and that without receiving any indemnity. The Emperor, who had already assigned a very definite type of representation to each theatre, the bounds of which it could not overstep, on November 1, 1807 created the office of superintendent of the great theatres. Three stages were dedicated to music: that of the *Opéra*, which had become the Imperial Academy of Music, the *Opéra-Comique* and the *Opéra-Buffer*—the last as a species of annex to the *Opéra-Comique*, under the name of "Empress's Theatre," with a monthly subvention of 10,000 francs.

In 1811 a new decree, dated August 13, reestablished in favor of the *Opéra*—already richly endowed with an annual subvention of 750,000 francs—the unique privilege of levying on all other theatrical performances dues or fees, which at times reached the figure of 200,000 francs per year. Since not a concert could be given "without the day having been set by the superintendent of our theatres, after consultation with the director of our Imperial Academy of Music," it was impossible that the musical life of the capital, save as regards dramatic music, could develop. The "exercises" of the pupils of the *Conservatoire* alone could supply aliment to nourish the interest of lovers of symphonic music.

As to the *Opéra-Comique*, merged with the lyric theatre of the *rue Feydeau* in 1801, the Emperor allowed it to take its place among the official theatres in 1804. Sometimes in the *Salle Favart*, at others in the *Salle Feydeau*, it continued to represent Méhul, Grétry, Monsigny, Duni, Philidor, Nicolo, Berton, etc., composers who were later joined by the young Boieldieu.

The *Conservatoire*, a child of the Revolution, was also the object of the master's solicitude. It was endowed with a new concert-hall, and with a library<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand the *Institute*, beginning with 1803, sent a musician to Rome every year, in company with the laureates, painters sculptors, and architects who had been going there since the time of Louis XIV. All in all, after a dozen years of instability, of demolition and creation, Bonaparte, then Napoleon, had regularized and hierarchized the musical institutions of France, just as he had all the branches of his administration.

<sup>1</sup>See Henri de Curzon, "History and Glory of the Concert-Hall of the Paris Conservatory," in the "Musical Quarterly," April, 1917.

Let us now examine into his personal relations with the artists of his period.



According to one of the modern biographers most at home with the intimate life of Napoleon, M. Frédéric Masson, the former was very sensitive to music, and was particularly fond of vocal music:

Among all the arts music is the only one for which he shows a special and personal liking. As to the others, he patronizes them from motives of policy, because of his passion for the grandiose, and the thought of immortality; but music he really and fully enjoys, is fond of it for its own sake, and because of the sensations it gives him. It calms his nerves, it cradles his reveries, it charms his melancholy moments, it fires his heart. What matter if he does sing out of tune, if he have a poor memory for a melody, and if he does not know his notes! Music moves him to the point of robbing him of his self-control, it drives him to offer the order of the iron crown of Lombardy to the soprano Crescentini; and this shows that he feels it more deeply than many of those who believe themselves capable of reading it. (*Napoléon et les femmes.*)

All kinds of music did not effect the Emperor with equal intensity. As we have already said, he instinctively preferred Italian music, especially that of Paisiello; and when he honored Lesueur, whose esthetics, if anything, are opposed to those of the Italians, one may even question whether he was as sincere as when he allowed himself to be captivated by the charm of his favorite Paisiello airs: the finale from the *Re Teodoro*, the duo from *La Molinara* (*Frà l'inchiostro e la farina*), or *Nina's* air (*Agitate frà mille pensieri*). It appears most probable that the pompous operas of Lesueur, Spontini and their emulators, the creators of the "Empire style" in music, flatter him as a sovereign rather than move him as a music lover.

Paisiello had come to Paris in 1801 to conduct the Consular orchestra, or, according to Reichardt (*Vertraute Briefe aus Paris*, 1, p. 95) to write a great French opera:

He receives 3,000 livres per month, and is provided with lodgings, service and an equipage free of charge. In return he composes and directs masses of the Consul. He still bears the title of *maître de chapelle* to the King of Naples, and is merely enjoying a leave of absence. He was first given a poem by Lemer cier to set to music, but Paisiello refused it, not knowing how to make the shadow who played the principal part in it sing in an interesting manner from start to finish. Meanwhile,



an old poem of Quinault's, *Proserpine*, arranged by Guillard, is being prepared for his use in the style of Marmontel, and he is at present working on the second act. (Letter of November 15, 1802.)

While awaiting the completion of *Proserpine*, the *Opéra-Comique* presented *la Molinara*, before an empty auditory, as Reichardt adds: the singer Strimasacchi filled the principal rôle very poorly indeed, though it was one she had formerly sung in Prague and in Leipsic. *Proserpine*, an opera by "the first conductor and composer in the service of H. M. the King of Naples, for the moment employed to compose and direct the private orchestra of the FIRST CONSUL," to quote the libretto—was at last given on the 8th Germinal of the Year XI (March 29, 1803), and had but slight success. Fourteen performances sufficed to satisfy the extraordinary curiosity which the announcement of its *première* had awakened months before. Bonaparte, incidentally, did not grace either the rehearsal nor the first performance with his presence, nor did the English Ambassador; a declaration of war between France and Great Britain was imminent, says Reichardt, and, in fact, hostilities were resumed in the month of May.

After this miscarriage, Paisiello, pretending that the climate of Paris did not agree with his wife, asked permission to return to Naples. Bonaparte had consulted him with regard to the choice of his successor; but having read in the *Journal de Paris* that it was expected that Méhul would be nominated to fill the vacancy, he immediately ordered Duroc to inform Lesueur of his nomination to the directorship of the orchestra. And when, that very day, Paisiello presented his colleague to the First Consul, the latter said: "I hope that you will still remain with us for a time; in the meanwhile, M. Lesueur will have to content himself with the second place," Lesueur replied: "General, I am already taking the first place when I follow in the footsteps of such a master as the illustrious Paisiello." This bit of repartee greatly pleased Bonaparte, and from that moment on the new director enjoyed the favor which was shown him to the end of the Empire—and even later.

The year following, on July 10, the teacher of Berlioz presented at the *Opéra*, which had just assumed the title of "Imperial Academy of Music," his opera *Ossian ou les Bardes*, whose subject-matter gave great pleasure to the master of France, an enthusiast as regards Ossianic poetry, then very much the fashion. During the course of the second performance, which he attended, Napoleon sent for the composer to come to his box and addressed him as follows: "Monsieur Lesueur, I salute you! Share in your triumph!



Your first two acts are beautiful, but your third is quite *inaccessible!*" And he made him sit down beside the Empress, in the front of the box, amid the acclamation of all those present. The following day Lesueur received a golden snuff-box with the inscription: "The Emperor of the French to the composer of *les Bardes*." The snuff-box contained the cross of the Legion of Honor, together with six bank-notes, each for a thousand francs.

After the *Bardes*, Lesueur contributed for the imperial coronation at Notre-Dame (December 2) a march and several pieces, though the mass which he conducted was by Paisiello; then, at the *Opéra*, in conjunction with Persuis, he gave *l'Inauguration du Temple de la Victoire* (January 2, 1807), the *Triomphe de Trajan* (October 23) and *la Mort d'Adam* (March 21, 1809); while in 1810 he composed a religious cantata for the wedding of Napoleon and Marie-Louise.

For the chapel of the Tuileries, Lesueur composed little oratorios which he interpolated in the service. These scores undoubtedly pleased the Emperor, for one day, wishing to reward Lesueur, who had just written his oratorio *Deborah*, whose military subject pleased Napoleon better than such subjects as *Ruth* or *Rachel*, for instance, he said:

Your music is grand, elevated, well adapted to its subject, it is solemn, it is devotional. It is what I feel that the music of the church should be. Have you composed other oratorios? "Yes Sire, the one to which Your Majesty has been listening is my eighteenth." Then you have blackened a good deal of music-paper. That is an expense in itself, and one for which I wish to pay. Monsieur Lesueur, I grant you a pension of 2,400 francs to pay for the music-paper you have used to such good effect. It is only to pay for the paper, you understand, for such a word as 'gratification' should not be mentioned to an artist of your merit. (Blangini.)

The other great French musicians of the time, Grétry, for example, never enjoyed the same measure of favor accorded Lesueur. One evening at Fontainebleau—*Zémire et Azor* was being sung—the Emperor had Grétry sit down beside him and, so Bouilly tells us, he "experienced the liveliest emotion while listening to the admirable trio of the magic picture and said, the words escaping from him as though against his will: "It is divine! It is perfect! I am very fond of that music." "Then you are not disgusted," replied Grétry, with his malicious smile and his observing glance. Napoleon smiled, and pressed the musician's hand. Yet, not long after, at a reception, he affected not to recognize Grétry, and asked him to recall his name to his memory. "Sire, it is still Grétry," was the reply. This witty retort was

not to the master's liking, however, and he turned his back on the composer.

With Méhul, who had been appointed a chevalier of the Legion of Honor when the order was first founded, Napoleon had been acquainted for some time, through Mme. Beauharnais. He had considered taking him to Egypt with him, but left him to remain "in charge at his Conservatory, and, still more important, at his theatre. These are his true roads to glory." Méhul, as we have seen, celebrated the fame of the conquerer of Italy, in 1800, at the Temple of Mars. Either after his performance, or at a later date, the Consul said to him: "Your music, perhaps, is even more learned and harmonious; yet that of Paisiello and Cimarosa has greater charms for me." These words suggested to Méhul the idea of composing an *opéra-bouffe* in the Italian style. Marsollier gave him the book of *l'Irato*, or *l'Emporté* (The Hot-Head) which was presented in the *Salle Favart* on February 17, 1801, at Carnival-time, and purported to come from the pen of a *Signor Fiorelli*. Its success was very marked and the First Consul himself enjoyed it greatly. It has been said that Méhul wished to mystify him in the imitating the Italians, but this is not very likely. Bonaparte had no patience with pleasantries, and Méhul might have had to repent his daring. It is more probable that the deception practiced upon the public had, on the contrary, been arranged in concert with Bonaparte himself: "No Frenchman could ever have written music like this," said the latter. According to Elwart, he also told the composer: "See that you deceive me often this way!" Be this as it may, Méhul dedicated the score of *l'Irato* to Bonaparte, in the following terms:

General Consul:

Your conversations regarding music having inspired me with the desire to compose some works less severe in style than those which I have hitherto produced, I chose *l'Irato*. My tentative having succeeded, it is my duty to dedicate it to you.

With respectful good wishes,  
Méhul.

An annotation which follows this dedication contains a declaration of the composer's principles, in which he informs the public that "it not hasten to boast of his conversion," and further on plainly affirms: "I know that the general taste is more inclined to be attracted by music which is purely pleasing, yet good taste never insists that truth be sacrificed to mere grace in music."

Two years after the production of *les Bardes*, Méhul, too, presented an Ossianic opera, *Uthal*, which the Emperor had per-

formed at Saint-Cloud. And then came *Joseph*, his master-work and one of the master-works of the imperial epoch.

Napoleon's relations to Cherubini were more strained. As we have already remarked, Cherubini had invited the antipathy of the First Consul by criticizing his musical tastes without sufficient discretion. "Paisiello's music is sweet and beneficent in its effects," Bonaparte one day remarked to him, "but your instrumentation is too heavy, and while Paisiello calms me in an agreeable manner, your compositions demand too much attention on the part of the auditor." Cherubini answered with animation—with too great animation—that one might be a great general and yet know nothing about harmony.<sup>1</sup>

It can be easily understood that with such opinions Cherubini was not a favorite at Court. Hence he made no difficulties about accepting the hospitality of Austria, toward the year 1800. It is possible that he might have remained long in Vienna, had not the chances of war taken Napoleon himself there in November 1806. "Always he, everywhere!" as Victor Hugo said. . . . At the time Cherubini was commanded by Napoleon to organize a dozen concerts at Schönbrunn, after which he returned to France. In 1808, however, he withdrew to the Ardennes, to the château of Chimay, where the former Mme. Tallien resided with the title of princess.

The misunderstanding between the Emperor and Cherubini did not come to an end until the period of the "Hundred Days," when the composer was made a member of the Institute and received the cross of the Legion of Honor. But then it was too late, and it was to the Restoration that Cherubini owed his official position as director of the *Conservatoire*.

Spontini was more fortunate. Having gone to France to seek his fortune there at the time when the effervescence of the Revolution was on the decline, at the moment when, together with Cherubini, an art which showed certain novel features had obtruded itself upon the lyric stage, he dedicated his "*Milton*," produced November 27, 1804, to the Empress Josephine. Not without some difficulty did he obtain from Jouy an opera book on one of those subjects drawn from the antique which were the fashion of the day, *la Vestale*, one which Cherubini and Méhul had already refused to set. Two or three years of effort, of application of retouching were necessary before an actual performance of this master-piece of the "Empire" style could take place.

<sup>1</sup>See the "Memoires" of the Baron de Tremont, "The Musical Quarterly," July 1920, pp. 381, 382.

Having become director of the Empress's music, Spontini owed it to the sovereign's protection that he could at length see his opera represented on December 17, 1807—after fourteen months of rehearsal, and following the *Triomphe de Trajan*, by Lesueur and Persius (October 14) which, for the Emperor, had a more immediate interest than an antique opera. According to Castil-Blaze, Napoleon had had the principal numbers of Spontini's score performed at the Tuileries as early as February, and following their audition had expressed his admiration for the *maestro* in the warmest terms:

Your opera abounds in new motives. Its declamation is sincere and in accordance with musical feeling. There are fine airs, duos whose effect is certain, a *finale* which carries away the listener. The march to the scaffold seems admirable to me. . . . Monsieur Spontini, I once more tell you that you will obtain a great success. And you will have merited it.

If we prune some of the embellishments which Castil-Blaze lavishes on all his accounts, there may be some truth in these words; yet it should be remembered that the Emperor never supported Spontini's opera before its production, and showed his preference for the *Triomphe de Trajan*, which flattered him personally, and Lesueur's *la Mort d'Adam*.<sup>1</sup>

Yet he was obliged to recognize that with his *la Vestale* Spontini had created the "Empire style" in music. Therefore, at the beginning of 1809, the Count de Rémusat, superintendent of theatres, informed the director of the *Opéra*, Picard, that the Emperor had decided to stage *Fernand Cortez*, Spontini's new opera, the book by Jouy and Esménard. This time the rehearsals did not drag; on the contrary it was necessary to urge on Spontini. Its *première*, with an extraordinary deploy of scenic means, took place November 28, 1809, and a brilliant success crowned music, action, artists and—Franconi's cavalry, fourteen horses mounted by the Franconi Brothers and their grooms! *Fernand Cortez*, already a forecast of the Meyerbeerian spectacular opera, held its place in the repertory until 1830. Yet, for reasons which are unknown, the performances were stopped after the thirteenth, and it was not brought forward again until ten years later. Then *la Vestale* did not leave the boards, however, and in 1810 carried off the decennial prize of 10,000 francs (only awarded once), decreed a musical work.

<sup>1</sup>From Saint-Cloud he wrote to M. de Luçay, on August 28: "I do not wish to have *la Vestale* given. I think it would be better to give *la Mort d'Adam*, since it is ready." The *Mort d'Adam* was not performed until March, 1809.

Appointed assistant-director of the Empress's Theatre that same year of 1810, Spontini, despite the official favor which he enjoyed, was dismissed by M. de Rémusat in 1812, and replaced by Paër, who accepted the appointment on condition that he be not required to give up his functions at Court.

Before taking up Napoleon's relations with individual singers, male and female, of his time, some mention should be made of Zingarelli, his other favorite composer. Zingarelli was choir-master at St. Peters in Rome when, having refused to have a *Te Deum* sung for the birth of the "King of Rome," in 1811, he was arrested and brought to Paris, incidentally, be it said, with every consideration. There he remained for a few weeks at the home of his friend Grétry, terrified, according to Castil-Blaze, lest he be asked to compose a *Te Deum* which he had firmly decided not to write when, one day (it was the first of January) he was ordered to write a mass, to be performed on the twelfth, and, later, a *Stabat Mater*. This last was sung at the Elysée on Good Friday, by Crescentini, Lays, Nourrit, Mmes. Branchu and Armand. Crescentini accomplished marvels in the verset *Vidit suum dulcem natum*, which a gesture from the Emperor bade him repeat.

After this success nothing further was demanded of the Master. One day, weary of inaction, Zingarelli ventured to ask whether he might be allowed to go back to Rome, whither his obligations as choir-master summoned him. The answer he received was:

Tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, to-day even, if that be your wish. M. Zingarelli is entirely at liberty. It is true that his sojourn in Paris has been a piece of good fortune to us; but His Majesty would be annoyed were he to neglect his duties.

This reply might be interpreted as a command, and Zingarelli hastened to leave Paris, after having received the tidy little sum of 14,000 francs to console him for his somewhat hasty displacement.

It was while this composer's *Romeo* was being represented at the Tuileries, that the male soprano Crescentini was given the cross of the Iron Crown. The scene has been recounted, as actually witnessed, by Mlle. Avrillon, one of the Empress's ladies-in-waiting:

On the day in question, I could see his Majesty's face perfectly through my lorgnettes, from the box in which I was seated, while Crescentini was singing the famous air *Ombra adorata* (Shadow adored)—which, according to Scudo, he himself had interpolated in the score—and, without any exaggeration, it was radiant with pleasure. The Emperor moved about in his arm-chair, spoke to the great dignitaries





**Madame Grassini**  
**(in the character of Zaira)**

of the Empire who surrounded him, and seemed to be trying to make them share in the admiration which he himself felt. The performance was not yet over when he had M. de Marescalchi called, and it was then that he told him to give Crescentini the cross of the order.

"The bestowal of this decoration," Las Casas remarked to Napoleon at Saint-Helena, at a later period, "caused much comment in Paris:" malevolence seized upon it with the greatest joy, and made the most of it. Nevertheless, at one of the brilliant *soirées* given in the *Faubourg Saint-Germain*, the indignation which it had aroused was drowned in a witty retort. ". . . It was an abomination," said one facile speaker, "a horror, a veritable profanation. By what right could a Crescentini claim it?" he cried. Upon which the handsome Mme. Grassini, rising majestically from her chair, replied in the most dramatic tones, and with a theatrical gesture: "And his *wound*, my dear sir, is that to count for nothing?" Whereupon ensued such a hubbub of delight and applause, that poor Grassini was greatly embarrassed by the success of her defence (*Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*).

The remembrance of "the handsome Grassini" must have recalled to the captive of Saint-Helena the happy days of the second campaign of Italy, and the connection he had formed at the time with the singer, who was then still young. In 1800 Guisseppina Grassini was twenty-seven; in the full splendor of her beauty and talent, equipped with an excellent contralto voice, pure and even throughout its entire range, and admirable in operas of the *semi-seria* style.

Bonaparte heard her in Milan, the day following or the second day after the battle of Marengo, as M. Frédéric Masson has already established. Already, two years before, in the self-same city of Milan, occupied by the French army, she had vainly endeavored to attract the attention of the young hero, who was then still faithful to Josephine. In 1800 he was not altogether the same; and, incidentally, "in Grassini, it was less the woman who captured his heart than the singer. She, entirely prepared, had been awaiting her opportunity for two years: one may imagine whether she offered a long resistance." The day following her concert at Milan, her departure for Paris had been decided upon, together with that of Marchesi and Mlle. Billington.

In Paris, she sang together with Bianchi, two duos at the *fête* given on July 14 at the *Invalides*, preceding Méhul's hymn for three choruses. "A fine piece in Italian, with fine Italian music," had been the general's demand. He was given two instead of one.



Bonaparte installed the Grassini in a small house in the *rue Chantereine*—recently rebaptized the *rue de la Victoire*—not far from the one he himself had occupied before going to the Tuileries. The singer soon grew bored here, for she had dreamed quite another dream in following the victor of Marengo. In search of consolation, she formed an intimacy with Rode, the great violinist. Then she resumed her liberty, after having given two concerts at the *Théâtre de la République* (March 17 and October 10, 1801). She returned to Paris after the establishment of the imperial choir, of which she remained a member until 1812. At the time she received a fixed salary of 36,000 francs, additional annual gratifications, and a pension of 15,000 francs. Besides this, she enjoyed the proceeds of a benefit concert given every winter at the *Opéra or aux Italiens*.

Blangini declares that the sovereign would permit neither Grassini nor Crescentini to sing in public. He adds:

At the time I was writing several songs, intended for Mme. Grassini's lovely voice. One day when she was to sing at the Tuileries before the Emperor, she gave me the words of an air she wished to add to her program, for me to set to music. These words, which she had written herself, read as follows:

*Adora i cenni tuoi questo mio cuor fedele;  
Sposa sarò se vuoi non dubitar di me.  
Ma un sguardo sereno, ti chiedo d'amor.*

"Your each command my faithful heart adores.  
I'll be your comrade if you trust in me.  
Only one smiling glance my love implores."

In the piece, Cleopatra is speaking to Cæsar; but on the stage, while she sang, Mme. Grassini often turned her glances in the direction in which the Emperor's box was situated; I am unable to say whether, that evening, she secured the "smiling glance of love."

In 1814, Mme. Grassini, like so many others, quickly forgot her imperial successes and favors. Says Scudo:

Always dramatic and always sensible the *prima donna* could not refrain from singing amorous duettos with Lord Castlereigh. In these intimate gatherings, at the residence of the man who had been the principal agent in forming the coalition against Napoleon, Mme. Grassini might be seen draped in the great Indian shawl which she used as a mantle, pompously declaiming the finest passages from the rôles she had presented at the theatre of the Tuileries. The Duke of Wellington was not vexed when this lovely Cleopatra told him:

*Adoro i cenni tuoi, questo mio cuor fedele,*

and history even affirms that the Duke of Wellington was not shy when it came to replying to this tender supplication with *un sguardo sereno d'amor*.

Mme. Catalani, whose contemporaries have praised her sonorous, powerful voice, full of charm, a soprano of prodigious range, which reached the superacute G, preferred British guineas to *Napoleons d'or*. After her two concerts at Saint-Cloud, which we have already mentioned, the Emperor went to visit her on the stage, and asked: "Where are you going?" "To London, Sire!" "Stay in Paris! You shall have 100,000 francs and two months leave of absence. The matter is settled. Adieu, Madame!" Mme. Catalani swept him a courtesy and—fled to Morlaix the following day, whence she made her way to England in spite of the Continental Blocade. She did not dare return to France until 1814, when she obtained the management of the *Théâtre Italien*. On the return of Napoleon from the Island of Elba, however, she found herself strangely embarrassed, and seized the first opportunity to disappear from Paris a second time, in the expectation of happier days.

Among the singers who won the esteem of Napoleon, at least for a time, must be mentioned Garat, who was the rage during the time of the Directory and Consulat, as a singer and a composer of romances. He was highly prized by Lucien Bonaparte, minister of the interior during 1799 and 1800. One reception day at the ministry, Mme. Récamier tells us, when dinner was served, the future emperor rose and led the way to the dining-room, where, without offering his arm to any of the women present, he seated himself at the middle of the table. Everyone sat down round about him as chance might dictate; Mme. Laetitia, his mother, at his right, Mme. Récamier on the same side, a little further off. Bonaparte who had counted on having this charming lady, whom he had failed to secure, for a table-companion, turned about in annoyance to the guests still standing, and then said to Garat, pointing to the place beside him: "Well, Garat, sit down there!" After dinner they went to the drawing-room. Bonaparte seated himself, alone, beside the piano, while the women formed a circle facing the musician, the men standing behind them. Garat sang an air by Gluck. After he had sung, several instrumental pieces were played, and at the close of a Sonata played by Jadin, the First Consul commenced to pound the piano violently, crying: "Garat! Garat!" It was an order. Garat returned to the piano, and sang an air from *Orpheus* which enchanted all his listeners.

The favor enjoyed by the singer-composer was forfeited, however, before the end of the Empire. Garat frequently sang at the Tuileries. Yet he was not able successfully to conceal his royalist sentiments; very witty and caustic, he gave vent to some hasty sallies which displeased the powers above. Napoleon thought he could discover an allusion to General Moreau in Lemer cier's *Bélisaire*, which Garat sang to music. The singer's romances *Henri IV et Gabrielle* and *Bayard*, among others, augmented the imperial resentment, which betrayed itself in a shabby enough fashion by the withholding of Garat's salary as a professor at the *Conservatoire*, during the fourteen concluding months of the Empire. This, however, had not prevented Napoleon from decorating the singer-composer with the order of the Legion of Honor; yet Garat, though very vain, did all in his power to conceal the fact that he had been decorated. However, if he was by no means a warm partisan of the Emperor, he remained greatly attached to the Empress Josephine, whom he continued to wait upon, after her divorce, in her retreat in Malmaison.

A great violinist, also appreciated by the Empress, was Alexander Boucher, whom we will mention in conclusion, and who was quite as famous for his extraordinary resemblance to the Emperor as for his art. Violinist to the King of Spain, Charles IV, Boucher undertook a journey to Germany in 1806, and managed to win the favor of Fanny de Beauharnais (who stood god-mother to his son) and of her niece, Josephine, then at Mayence. Josephine wished to appoint him her first violinist. Received shortly after at the Tuileries, Boucher made his appearance one day at a Court festival with the Spanish embassy, in the uniform of a colonel, his proper rank as director of the King of Spain's music. Napoleon, having noticed the uniform, asked Duroc who the officer might be. Duroc, having questioned Boucher, told him that he was the generalissimo of the sixteenth-notes of all the Spains. "What is his name?" "Alexander Boucher," replied the Empress, "he is the celebrated violinist whom I wished to present to Your Majesty." "Well, he is sufficiently presented," replied Napoleon, "he is here right under my eyes." "I had thought that an artist of his merit," added Josephine. . . . "Could not be more happily situated," the Emperor continued her phrase. "Let him return to Madrid; a generalissimo should never leave his army." "Still, if he should prefer Your Majesty's service?" "Do not mention the man to me again," Napoleon said curtly. The Emperor's self-esteem was wounded by the artists' striking resemblance to him. When Charles IV was brought a prisoner

to Fontainebleau, in 1808, Boucher did not abandon him, but remained with him in Marseilles, until an order of the day coming from the Emperor, who could not suffer a man to resemble him physically, obliged him to leave the sovereign.

\* \* \*

It would be easy to add anecdotes to those already given, but we must refrain. We have recalled the most characteristic among them, and those which present musicians famous for various reasons. In general, they show the decisive and authoritative spirit displayed by Napoleon with regard to music as to all else, and the importance he attached to an art which he valued, not only for the pleasure it gave him personally, but also because he had observed its influence on other men as well as on himself, and knew how to make it serve his political ends.

It would be pleasant to be able to affirm that the Napoleonic legend has been able to inspire the musicians with as happy results as it has the poets, novelists and painters of the nineteenth century; yet hardly anything at all has come of it, musically, and it is in the domain of song, more especially, a form highly prized at all times and under every government, that the French have celebrated their hero. Is it not in their songs that the people have always guarded the memory of the great occurrences of history?

No sooner had he returned from his Italian campaign than couplets on well-known airs celebrated the praises of the victorious general; then the defeated of Brumaire were sung; and finally, the Empire was acclaimed. Napoleon found his Homer of the people in the person of Béranger (1780-1857); one of whose poems, *le Cinq Mai*, or *la Mort de Napoléon*, is the only one, perhaps, which has inspired a truly great composer. Berlioz made a cantata of it for bass voices, which was sung on different occasions, notably on December 13, 1840, two days before the return of Napoleon's ashes to the *Invalides*. This event itself only brought forth a few romances by obscure musicians, a quadrille by Musard, and a gallop suggested by the frigate *la Belle Poule*.

The government of Louis-Philippe had first thought of having Cherubini's *Requiem* sung at the ceremony at the *Invalides*, but remembering that it had been written for the funeral of Louis XVIII, decided that Mozart's would be a more fitting choice. Three hundred executants were gathered at the *Invalides* on December 15, and each of the solo parts was sung by four of

the greatest artists in Paris: Mmes. Grisi, Damoreau, Persiani and Dorus, sopranos; Pauline Garcia, Eugénie Garcia, Albertazzi, and Stolz, contraltos; Rubini, Duprez, Ponchard, Alexis Dupont and Nasset, tenors; and Lablache Tamburini, Levasseur, Baroilhet and Alizard, basses. Adolphe Adam, in a letter written December 25, to his Berlin friend Spiker, remarked:

Never has this master-piece by Mozart been sung with such brilliancy. The dress rehearsal was held at the *Opéra*, before an immense assembly of people and caused a tremendous sensation. After the mass the three funeral marches composed by Auber, Halévy and myself were played, and on this occasion I had the pleasure of triumphing over my two illustrious rivals. Auber's march made no impression whatever; that of Halévy was judged to be a fine symphonic composition, lacking the character demanded by the occasion. My own was more fortunate: I had written it in two sections, one funereal, and the other triumphant; and this contrast was perfectly grasped by the public, which understood as well as I did, that this funeral, taking place twenty years after the hero's death, should be a triumph.

The day of the ceremony, together with my two hundred musicians, I went to Neuilly, where Napoleon's casket was to be disembarked, to conduct these marches. Unfortunately, the cold was so excessive that the artists and their instruments were frozen, and the performance was a very defective one. During the entire progress of the procession, the musicians played my march and that of Auber. Halévy's march could not be played, because his symphony was too difficult to execute, and not sufficiently rhythmic to allow it to be marched to.

Berlioz, who had been set aside in this ceremony, would not admit that his *Requiem*, sung two years before in that very chapel of the *Invalides*, had not been required of him. He is even said to have refused to compose a funeral march leaving it to Auber, Halévy and Adam, to "break their necks on his *Apothéose de juillet*," given during the past summer. "O, my divine Emperor!" he cries, after the ceremony at the *Invalides*, "What a pitiable reception was accorded you! My tears froze on my lashes for shame rather than cold. . . The Mozart *Requiem* made a sorry enough impression, for despite the fact that it is a master-piece it was not cast in the proportions which such a ceremony demanded."

There was also in Paris, at this same time, a young German musician, who was present at the funeral of Napoleon, at the moment when the processional entered the *Invalides*, on that glacial Tuesday afternoon, December 15, 1840.

*Jour beau comme la gloire,  
Froid comme le tombeau.*

("Day fair as glory,  
Cold as the tomb.")

—Victor Hugo

His name was Richard Wagner, and he had just arranged Donizetti's *La Favorite* for the piano, and published a little romance, entitled "A Visit to Beethoven," in the *Gazette musicale*; in addition he acted as Paris correspondent for a Dresden periodical. He alludes to the funeral of Napoleon in an article on Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, calling attention to the charming *Parisiennes* in search of religious music, after having heard Mozart's *Requiem* sung at the *Invalides*, by Rubini and Mlle. Persiani, and Rossini composing for them a *Stabat Mater* as far from devotional as possible. It was at this time, too, that Wagner wrote his "Two Grenadiers" to Heine's poem; Schumann's setting of which was later to gain the greatest popularity.

Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann—Napoleon received the homage of the greatest, after his apotheosis, as, while alive, and unconscious of the fact, he had inspired Beethoven to write his *Eroica* Symphony, "written upon Bonaparte," which remains the most sublime and worthy tribute ever paid the hero.

One can understand that genuine musicians have not endeavored to rewrite the *Eroica*, nor measure themselves with Beethoven, whose name will ever be inseparably linked with that of the First Consul, who inspired him.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens.)

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